WILLIS STEELL

Mortal Lips

Illustrated by MAUDE RICHMOND

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MORTAL LIPS

BY

WILLIS STEELL

. . . Like images
In a lone lake. The watcher sees
Lips smiling to him from the brim;
Alas, intangible to him!

Hesper and Phosphor

ILLUSTRATED BY MAUDE RICHMOND

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TO

FRANCIS LIVINGSTON MOODEY.

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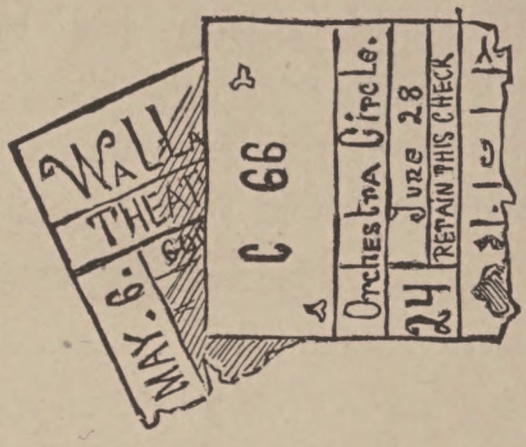
THE LITTLE HOUSE IN HARLEM.

JULIUS MATHEWS,	its master.
MADGE MATHEWS,	its mistress.
CHARLES VANE,	guest.
CLARA VANE,	guest.
PHIL SOLDER,	guest.
MARY,	the maid.
LAFAYETTE,	colored, a butler for a day.

THE THEATRE COUPON.

MOCK TURTLE SOUP.

MORTAL LIPS.



THE THEATRE COUPON.

SCENE.—The little house in Harlem. Table set for dinner. Doors R. L. and centre door into hall. Handsome fireplace, etc.

[MRS. MATHEWS *and* MARY *discovered. The former moving about restlessly.*]

Mary.—The eyesters is burnt up, mum, an' 'tis sivin by the clock.

Mrs. M.—Yes, yes, I know, Mary. Mr. Mathews is very late, but he must come soon now. Try to keep the dinner nice for a while longer.

Mary.—Sure, mum, an' this aint the Brunswick.

I'll be puttin' the things back in the oven to take their chance. It would be more convanient if we was livin' on a flat.

Mrs. M.—Well, do the best you can. Stay, Mary. Oh, Mary, do you think something has happened to him! Julius is always so prompt. Perhaps there has been an accident on that terrible Elevated!

Mary.—There, mum, don't be worritin' because he's late. It's the way with the men. Me sister's man, Tom, is just like him. If he's expecting a wake in the house an' a friend asks him to take a drink—

Mrs. M.—You may go now, Mary. Wait a minute; I think I hear a key in the lock. Yes, it is my husband. Serve the dinner, Mary.

[*Enter* JULIUS, *flushed and breathless. Kisses* MADGE.]

Julius.—Here we are, Madge.

Madge.—Oh, Julius, are you hurt? Was there an accident?

Julius.—Am I hurt? There's a cheerful idea. What put that into your head?

Madge.—But, dear, you are so late.

Julius.—Where's the dinner? Isn't it ready? I am dying of hunger. I will tell you all about it while we eat.

Madge.—I am afraid everything is spoiled. But never mind; you have no bones broken, and that is the principal thing. Here comes Mary with the oysters.

[*They seat themselves at table.* JULIUS *pulls out handkerchief to wipe his brow and brings with it a slip of pink cardboard, which falls to the floor.*]

Julius.—It's fearfully warm here, Madge. Can't you lower the gas or something?

Madge.—Oh, you have been running, dear, because you were late. Tell me what kept you.

Julius.—You are the first cause, my darling. I stopped off at Park Place on my way up-town to get you that back number of the fashion paper— By Jove, I came off without it, at last!

Madge.—Never mind, Julius. You stopped off, and then?

Julius.—And then, as I was crossing the park, somebody clapped me on the shoulder; that somebody was no other than Phil Solder.

Madge.—What a funny name! Who, pray, is Phil Solder?

Julius.—Phil Solder. Madge, that's too bad! If I have spoken once of Phil, I have a hundred times.

He was at Princeton my last year. The best company in the world. I have only met him once or twice since then, and till to-day I had not seen him since our marriage. He is as young as ever. A great smoker and awfully Bohemian, he has drifted naturally into journalism. I should have asked him to dine with us but for the inflexible rule—no invitation unless you have been warned. I'll ask him some other time if you say so. Oh, Phil is jolly; you'll like Phil. We went into Hudnut's for a little talk: how the beggar made me laugh! Phil is on the Dramatic Press. By the way, you want to see the play at the Union Square: he offered to give me two seats.

Madge.—It will be charming. Shall I have Mary bring up the coffee now?

Julius.—Just wait a minute till I fill my pipe.

[*Exit* JULIUS, door R.]

Madge.—Put on your slippers, dear, while Mary and I clear the table. We will sit in this room, as it's pleasanter. [*She stoops to pick up napkin from the floor. Discovers pink slip.*] Why, what is this? No. 24. A theatre coupon! Julius must have dropped it. I wonder—

[*Re-enter* JULIUS.]

Julius.—What are you thinking about, little one?

Madge.—Are you very busy at the office nowadays, Julius?

Julius.—Um—ah—so-so.

Madge.—How I wish you could find time to go to

a matinee with me again! Don't you remember how fond we were of matinees before we were married?

Julius.—*You* were, of course. As for me, I felt out of place among a lot of women.

Madge.—We have never been since—together, I mean.

Julius.—I have not been at all.

Madge.—Are you sure, Julius?

Madge.—Sure of what?

Madge.—That you have never been to a matinee since we were married.

Julius.—Certainly not. What time have I for that sort of thing? Why do you ask?

Madge.—To find out—if you are working too hard.

Julius.—What nonsense!

Madge.—[*Sotto voce.*] Is it nonsense? I havn't been to the theatre in over a month. Mary didn't have her day out last week; and, besides, she wouldn't take an orchestra reserve. This theatre ticket didn't come here by itself, so my husband must have brought it. He went to a matinee to-day, and I don't believe he went alone! Where is the mate to this ticket? Oh, he probably sent it by mail and met her at the theatre, as if by chance. It's clear now what made him late to dinner. Julius invented that story of a college chum to deceive me. But I'm not to be so easily deceived. [*Aloud.*] I think I will get my work.

[*Places coupon on the mantelpiece behind rose jar, and exit* L.]

Julius.—What ails this pipe that it won't draw? I'll try some fire. Where are the matches? It beats all

how my wife covers the chimney-piece with knick-knacks. Ah! there you are behind that candlestick! [*He sees coupon.*] Hullo! What's this? She went to the theatre to-day; queer she never mentioned it.

[*Re-enter* MADGE *with her embroidery.*]

Madge.—Do you like this pattern, Julius?

Julius.—Did you go out to-day, Madge?

Madge.—Oh, no indeed: the weather was too bad.

Julius.—You stopped at home all day?

Madge.—Yes, and it isn't the first time.

Julius.—I know it, and I congratulate you. A wife should love her home. Now let me read. [*Aside.*] Why didn't she tell me? She knows I should be pleased if she enjoyed the play. I wonder what theatre she went to. Of course she went to one—that coupon couldn't come here by itself; Madge brought it. She denies she was out because she went somewhere or with someone I wouldn't approve. Who could he have been? It's clear she tells an untruth. There is some mystery here, and I mean to solve it at once. [*Tosses his book into the corner. Aloud, angrily.*] Now I want to know all about it.

Madge.—Julius, how you startled me!

Julius.—Tell me the truth; you went out to-day?

Madge.—Julius, that is too much. For the last ten minutes I have been embroidering outside of my design and pricking my fingers on the needle, wondering why you attempt to deceive me, and now you ask me if I went out to-day. I have already told you I did not.

Julius.—Yes, yes; I know it: you say that to turn

the conversation; but I beg you to answer this question: Were you at a matinee to-day?

Madge.—It is my right to ask questions, sir, if it comes to that. I desire that you tell me the truth at once: were you at a matinee to-day?

Julius.—How absurd! I can scarcely credit your

duplicity. Answer me, were you at a matinee to-day?

Both.—Were you at a matinee to-day?

Madge.—Hush! there is Mary. I wish to act, sir, as if you had a character left to preserve.

[*Enter* MARY.]

Mary.—If you plaze, mum, the dishes will hould over to-morrow, an' I would like to see my sister this evening.

Madge.—Quite right; but get back early. Fill the scuttle and set it by the grate, and you are free to go to your sister.

[MARY *brings in coal and throws a shovelful on the fire, dusts the mantel, and exit.*]

Julius.—I can understand what has been going on without an avowal from you. All your comings and goings—Macy's, Lord & Taylor's, the Academy—pure pretexts. Imbecile that I was, never to suspect anything, when you displayed so little interest in the new plays at the theatres. Why? You had already seen them. And I thought you were trying, like a good wife, to economize. Oh, fool! But a man is always a fool when he trusts a woman.

Madge.—What do you dare to say? I believe if either one of us has the right to reproach the other, I am that one. The reasons you have offered for being late—an accidental meeting with a friend, supplementary work at the office—are false, sir; false. For a long time I have been thinking of something—that girl whom you were once engaged to. I know her father has removed to New York; but you did not inform me. Did she look pretty at the theatre to-day?

Julius.—Ah, I was expecting to hear her mentioned. It is nearly two weeks now since you went over the old ground. But I am weary of hearing it. Listen: if ever you pronounce—

Madge.—Threats! Oh, there is nothing wanting. I am going home to my mother. The poor woman won't be surprised.

Julius.—Just what I was about to advise. Go, go home to your good mother, and stay there as long as possible. Stay until I come to claim you.

[*A confused noise on the pavement interrupts him. A number of people ascend the steps and enter the hall. Words can be caught before the speakers appear.*]

Usher.—Well, are we here at last?

Mary.—[*Sobbing.*] I am an honest gurll—sor—I—

Policeman.—That's what we want to find out.

Mary.—My missus will give me a charactur—

Policeman.—Go in first and get it.

[*Enter the above party.*]

Madge.—Mary! What has happened? What have you done?

Julius.—Girl, what is the meaning of this?

Policeman.—She says she—

Usher.—She struck—

Mary.—I'm an honest gurrl—

Julius.—Silence! If everybody speaks at once, it won't be possible to understand anyone. Now, you sir, what brings you here?

Usher.—I beg pardon, sir, but—

Mary.—Let me speak first, sor. Mum—oh, mum, listen to me, mum. It's blessed truth I say.

Julius.—Go ahead, then, Mary: tell your story; but be calm.

Mary.—Mum and sor. I went straight to me sister, Mrs. Harrigan, after I left this house, an' it was there, mum an' sor, I expected to find Mrs. Harrigan. But divil a bit, savin' yer presence, mum an' sor, for it's the excitement, only little Sallie mindin' the childer, an' her mother gone wid Tom to the Harlem

Theayter. Sure, mum an' sor, I had the money in my pocket, and what did I do but go after them. There sat a little man in a cage, an' he sould me a ticket in the orchester—faith, that was the only seat lift in the house, the man in the cage swore to me, mum an' sor. So in I walks like a leddy, an' the curtain up. This spalpeen met me at the dour an' asked for me check. He said it was half the ticket the man outside had give me, an' that was in me pocket. When he took it he went afore me to a seat, an' there was a lady in it already, with a pink paper the twin of me own. Then this spalpeen turned me ticket over and over, and said it belonged to Wallick. That made me mad, mum and sor, an' I snatched me ticket from him wid me left hand, and clipped him at the same time wid me right. He was goin' to hit me back, an' me a leddy, but a gintleman, bliss him, stepped up, an' then they calls the bobbies, an' was takin' us both to the station. I begged 'em to bring me here, mum an' sor, for it was you as would give me a character.

Julius.—Why didn't you go back to the ticket-seller, Mary? Of course it was his mistake.

Usher.—He had gone home, sir: but the check the girl gave me surely came off a Wallack ticket.

Mary.—You're a loiar.

Policeman.—What interest can he have, Mary, in saying your check's bad, if it's good?

Usher.—Perhaps you had two checks in your pocket; were you ever at Wallack's, Mary?

Mary.—Niver once. I had that one, an' niver another. You can see for yourself. [*Turning out her pocket.*] Howly saints! there's two of 'em! Oh, that explains it, mum an' sor. It is me as gave the bad one for the good.

Usher.—Where did that coupon come from, Mary?

Mrs. M.—Mr. Mathews can answer that question.

Julius.—Mrs. Mathews can explain that.

Mary.—Sure an' it's easy now to remember. I was brushin' off the chimney-piece after I'd fitched the scuttle, an' I saw that bit of board stickin' there. So I whisked it into my pocket, meanin' to throw it away.

[*The hall bell jingles violently.*]

Mrs. M.—Run, Mary, and see who is there; tell them I'm not at home.

[*Enter* PHIL SOLDER *in a tremendous hurry, pushing* MARY *aside.*]

Phil.—[*Faintly.*] Mathews! Mathews!

Julius.—The world has run mad. What is it? What is the matter with you?

Phil.—[*Sinking into a chair.*] I beg pardon, Mrs. Mathews, for pushing myself in like this, but I am in the greatest perplexity. Tell me, Julius, have you found in your pocket a theatre coupon?

Julius.—Still another! Perhaps you mean this one?

Phil.—Yes, yes, that's it. Oh, I'm thankful to get it again.

Julius.—But explain!

Phil.—Oh, it's simple enough. You know how I'm always playing one foolish trick or another, and when we were in Hudnut's, I shoved that matinee coupon into your pocket without reflecting that I had written on the back of it the address of some friends who expect me to dinner this evening. They are not in the directory. What a search I've had!

Julius.—Defend me from a practical joker! If it were not for our old friendship, this should not pass so easily.

Phil.—No? Why not?

Julius.—Why not? It would take too long to tell, but you must know that, thanks to your clever prank, I have had a violent discussion with my wife, and our

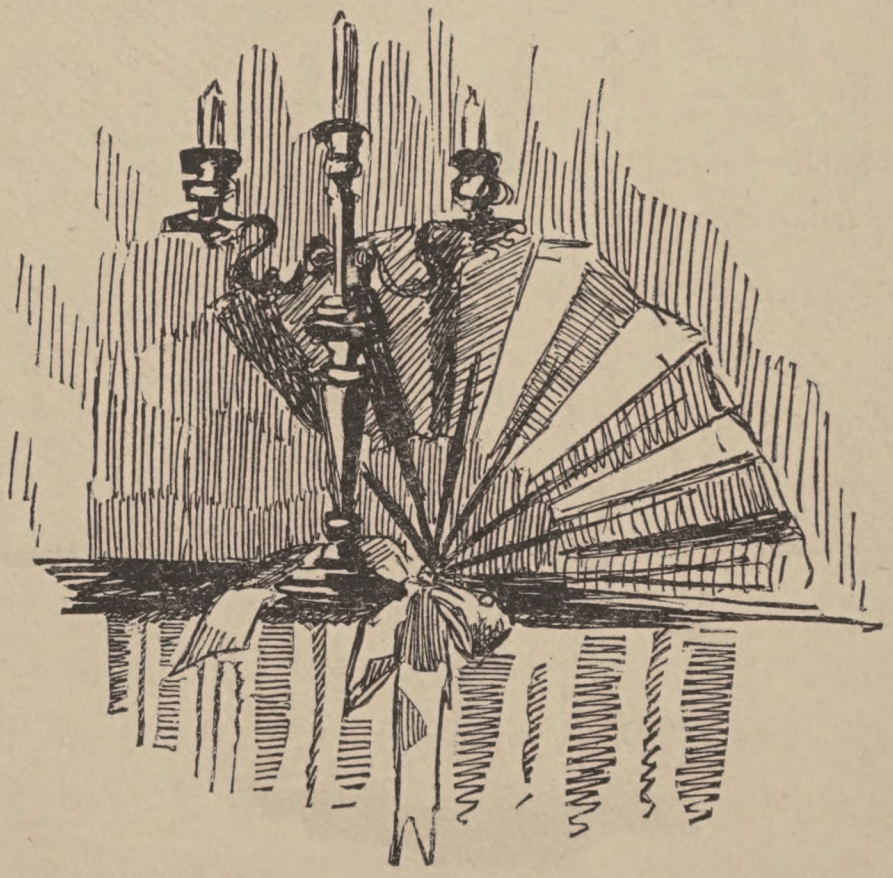
good Mary here has barely escaped spending the night in prison.

Phil.—Oh, Julius! Pray accept a thousand excuses. I was very far from foreseeing. Mrs. Mathews, I can only throw myself on your clemency. Now I demand permission to save myself. My friends expected me at eight o'clock; it is nearer nine. I have just time to take a swift cab and carry my apologies. Mrs. Mathews, Julius, pardon me and good-bye.

[*Exeunt all except husband and wife.*]

Mrs. M.—Julius!

Mr. M.—Madge!



MOCK TURTLE SOUP.

A PROLOGUE TO A DINNER.

SCENE.—Same as in "Theatre Coupon."
TIME.—Sunday afternoon.

[JULIUS *is discovered lying asleep on a lounge.* MADGE *at the window.*]

Madge.—Julius!

Julius.—Eh!

Madge.—I am sure it's going to rain. Come and look at this cloud.

Julius.—[*Yawning.*] Nonsense! It will blow over.

Madge.—It will *not* blow over, Julius. It has remained stationary for nearly an hour.

Julius.—Sunday is a day of rest for clouds as well as man. Let me sleep.

Mrs. M.—But the Vanes won't come if it rains, and I have provided so many more things than we need. Lafayette, too, whom you insisted on having up from your office to act as butler—of course, you must pay him, whether the Vanes come or not.

Julius.—A trifle, Madge; don't worry about the dinner. But why do you say I insisted on having Lafayette to serve?

Mrs. M.—Well, we know the Vanes have a colored butler, and I don't blame you for wishing to make an

equally good appearance. It's a pity he's so awkward. [*A noise of breaking glass is heard.*] There, listen to that! He will drive Mary frantic.

Julius.—I have no doubt there will be a war of races in the kitchen. I should like to be there unseen to see.

Mrs. M.—He is such a good soul. How he loves you, Julius!

Julius.—Who?

Mrs. M.—Lafayette. When he came he bowed almost to the floor, and made so many polite speeches that I asked him where he learned them. Said he, waving his hand quite in your manner, Julius, "I'se a studyin' Marse Mathews, Miss Mathews. I'se a fashionin' myse'f on him."

Julius.—Absurd!

Mrs. M.—Not at all. I call it very flattering. Mercy, Julius, what is that?

[*Enter* MARY, L., *in great indignation.* LAFAYETTE *follows her.*]

What now, Mary? Has the range exploded?

Mary.—[*Hoarsely.*] No, mum; but I have, mum; an' niver a minute longer will I stay in me kitchen wid that black nagur, mum!

Julius.—[*Laughing.*] I told you so. What's the row, Mary? What trick has Lafayette been playing you?

Mary.—What ain't he, sir? Breakin' chany an' glass, mum, till it's a heavy bill he'll have to pay out of his wages, an' him no wages but his day's wurruk. Tain't the half of it, mum. No, mum; I shan't stand no nagur's arm round me waist, an' his black fingers under me chin, an' me as had no wurrud to say to Teddy—

Mrs. M.—Why, Mary, is it possible?

Julius.—Lafayette, you old rascal, this is carrying a joke too far.

Mrs. M.—How mild you are, Julius! Such actions are outrageous!

Mary.—Faith, so they be, mum; an' him to say that the mast—

Mrs. M.—[*Quickly.*] What did he say, Mary?

Mary.—As he'd saw the master do the likes of that wid the type-writer gurrl; but whativer her character may be, mum—

Madge.—Are you sure he said that? Lafayette, did you say that?

Lafayette.—Oh, yes, Miss Mathews, I see marse do dat. It's great fun, he say; an' dat it is, Miss Mathews.

Julius.—[*Hastily.*] How dare you play your pranks on Mary? She is not used to your jesting. Why, Madge, the old man is a licensed practical joker, like all of his race, you know. But we can't afford to upset Mary. Here! [*Calling* LAFAYETTE *and giving him money.*] Now pack yourself off.

Madge.—[*With assumed calm.*] Lafayette, go and rub the parlor furniture; you will find a duster in the hall. We won't need you till dinner—come when I ring. Return to the kitchen, my poor Mary. I will protect you from the insults of designing men.

[*Exeunt* LAFAYETTE, L.; MARY, R.]

Julius.—What a fund of humor have the darkies! Perfectly irresistible and inexhaustible! I have never been South, but I can readily believe that the cotton fields and the sugar plantations in the time of harvest are the theatre of mirth. By the way, Madge, when do they harvest sugar? You are so much better read than I.

Madge.—I do not know.

Julius.—And that reminds me; did you ever taste beet-root sugar, Madge? It's very good sugar; pleasant taste, but not so sweet and white as—

Madge.—I understand you, sir. I have been stupid,

but at last I have learned the lesson all women must learn—to distrust all men. [*With suppressed passion.*] Julius Mathews, I despise you!

Julius.—Oh, come, Madge, you mustn't take stock in Lafayette's little joke. Even if it were true, there could be no harm in it. My stenographer is a mere child—hardly thirteen.

Mrs. M.—She must be precocious. [*Rings the bell.*]

Julius.—She is—very! Extremely mature—in mind, I mean.

Mrs. M.—So I imagine. [*Rings again.*]

Julius.—Why do you ring?

Mrs. M.—While I think of it, I mean to ask Lafayette the name and age of your precocious clerk. I might forget.

Julius.—No danger, worse luck! Confound it, Madge, don't make a scene before the servants.

[MRS. M. *rings again angrily.* LAFAYETTE *appears at door,* L.]

Mrs. M.—I have rung for you twelve times.

Julius.—[*Aside.*] Oh, twelve times!

Mrs. M.—That is right, contradict me before a servant.

Julius.—It's bad form to exaggerate.

Lafayette.—[*As if repeating a lesson.*] Twelve times. It's bad form to ex—

Mrs. M.—[*Excited.*] You hear! He mocks me! How disgusting he is, filling the dining-room with cigar smell!

Julius.—He doesn't smoke cigars.

Mrs. M.—With his horrid pipe!

Julius.—He doesn't smoke at all.

Mrs. M.—Open the window and let out that nasty odor of tobacco.

[JULIUS *throws up window, seizes his newspaper, and reads.*]

Lafayette.—I'se a fashionin' of myse'f on Marse Mathews, Miss. Marse Mathews don't smoke—I don't smoke. Marse Mathews read de *Sun;* I read de *Sun.*

Mrs. M.—That will do. What has the sun to do with this affair, except to keep the Vanes from coming. It aggravates me to hear anyone speak of the sun—it hasn't shone all day.

Julius.—[*Laughing.*] Yes, let's speak of it. The *Sun* is a safe subject.

Lafayette.—Yes, Miss Mathews, it's a—

Mrs. M.—Never mind what it is. [*Sweetly.*] How old are you, Lafayette?

Lafayette.—Lordy, Miss, I dunno. Mos' twenty, I spec.

Mrs. M.—[*More sweetly.*] And how old is Mr. Mathew's type-writer?

Lafayette.—Dunno, Miss. Her's a chile.

Mrs. M.—Indeed! That is all. You may go back to your polishing.

[*A long silence.* JULIUS *continues to read his paper.* MRS. M. *throws herself into an arm-chair, bites her nails, taps the floor with her toes, etc.*]

Julius.—[*Relenting.*] What are we to have for dinner?

Madge.—Oh, you will not die of hunger. You know very well that, having expected the Vanes, who are not coming—

Julius.—Well, what are we going to eat?

Madge.—Roast beef, squab, sole, vegetables.

Julius.—Splendid! And what soup?

Madge.—Mock turtle soup.

Julius.—Splendid!

Madge.—Splendid, of course, because you like it.

Julius.—I didn't ask you to have it. For whom did you make it?

Madge.—For you.

Julius.—Thanks. You have mock turtle to please me, but you are displeased when I say "splendid."

Madge.—No, but you would not say "splendid" if it was something I liked that you didn't like; and I do not like mock turtle soup.

Julius.—Why do you have it then?

Madge.—Because you like it; and this is how you thank me. I am well paid.

Julius.—Pshaw, Madge, you are ill-tempered.

Madge.—Any woman would be in my position.

Julius.—Oh, if you are bound to believe what that imbecile of a negro says.

Madge.—I'm sure I wish I had never seen him. But you insisted on having him wait to-day.

Julius.—*I* insisted?

Madge.—Yes, to lend an air of style to your establishment. You want your friend Vane to think you richer than you are, and now they are not coming.

Julius.—Considering the state of the atmosphere indoors as well as out, it is to be hoped they'll stay away.

Madge.—You are disposed to be witty. Well, is your negro never going to serve the dinner?

Julius.—Are you hungry? It's only five o'clock.

Madge.—[*Ringing.*] Six o'clock.

Julius.—Five. Look at my watch for yourself.

Madge.—Your watch is slow.

[*The hall clock strikes five.*]

Julius.—Do you hear? Five.

Madge.—Oh, I did not count.

Julius.—Of course not. You never do.

Madge.—Well, is the soup never coming?

Julius.—What's your hurry? You don't like mock turtle soup.

Madge.—Listen to that! I make my husband's

favorite soup, and he never ceases to scald me with it. Julius, you provoke me.

Julius.—And your good-humor provokes me.

Madge.—Truly, I ought to be in a good humor. For an hour you have been trying to quarrel with me.

Julius.—I? *I* have been trying to quarrel—

[*Enter* LAFAYETTE, *with soup tureen.*]

Lafayette.—Here's de soup, mock turtle soup, Marse Mathews.

Julius.—It comes at the right time. Behold, madam, how I treat my favorite soup.

[*He hurls tureen through open window.*]

Madge.—Julius, are you crazy?

[*Hall bell rings.* *Exit* LAFAYETTE.]

The Vanes! Julius, what shall we say? Are you sure it is not six o'clock? Am I fit to be seen? Why, what's the matter, Julius? Cheer up, dear. The Vanes will think we have been quarrelling.

[*Enter* L., MR. *and* MRS. VANE.]

Mrs. Vane.—My darling Madge!

Madge.—Dearest Clara! We had reluctantly given you up! How sweet of you to come when the weather looks so threatening. And so prompt!

Mrs. Vane.—Are we really early? We threw off our wraps in the hall, because I feared it was late.

Lafayette.—Yes, Miss, I hung de lady's cloak on de banistrade.

Madge.—Very good. Serve dinner immediately, Lafayette. Tell Mary to send up the soup.

Lafayette.—De soup's done gone, miss.

Madge.—I quite forgot. Clara, you will overlook it. A sad accident has happened to the soup. Will you

sit here, dearest, next to Julius? How well that lovely gown becomes you!

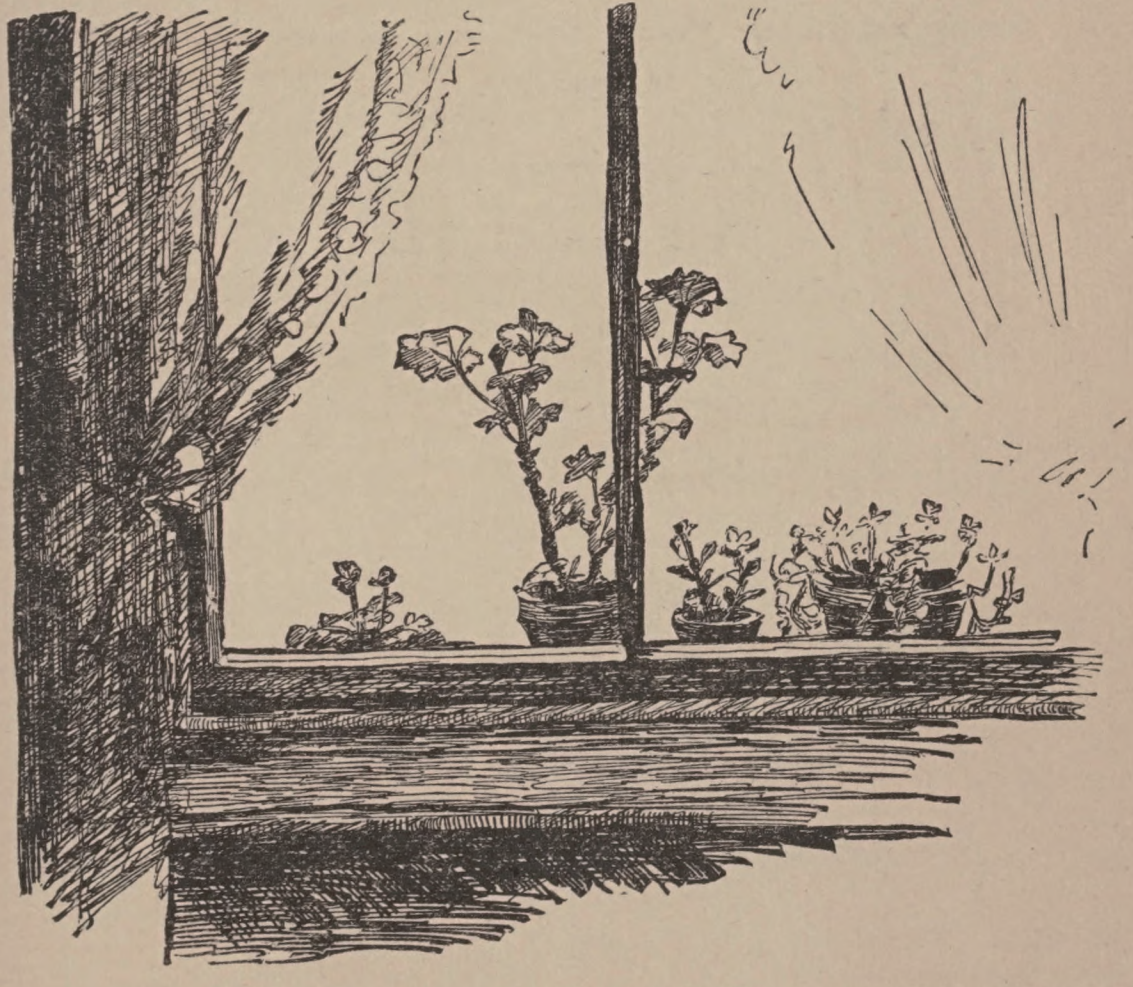
Mr. Vane.—Under the weather, Mathews? You seem blue.

Mrs. Vane.—Perhaps *he* won't overlook the soup. Husbands are not so generous as old school friends, are they, Madge?

Madge.—It was Julius' favorite—mock turtle soup.

Julius.—My favorite! Mock turtle! I hate the very name of it.

[ACT DROP.]



THE MIDDLE-SIZED HOUSE

ON

IRVING PLACE.

The family and their guests have been already introduced to the readers.

THE MINIATURE.

THE MINIATURE.

ACT FIRST.—Passes in MRS. MATHEWS' sitting-room. At back is book-case where JULIUS sits reading. MADGE and MR. SOLDER sit near a small table.

Madge.—Lost! Oh, you can't mean—

Phil.—Yes, the miniature. I'm the most unhappy of men.

Julius.—[*Looking up.*] What's that you say, Phil?

Phil.—A speech from the theatre. [*Lower.*] Can he hear?

Madge.—Speak in that tone and go on. You have lost it! what shall I do?

Phil.—You cannot feel worse than I, Mrs. Mathews.

To think of losing the miniature you put in my hands for safekeeping! If I could get one painted in time!

Madge.—Too late! His birthday is to-morrow. I must give him something else. But tell me how it happened—there, I'm confident it was not your fault.

Phil.—Are you sure Julius won't hear? My discomfiture would please him too much.

Madge.—He is deep in his book. Go on: was it stolen?

Phil.—Woman's quick wit! Yes, exactly. Day before yesterday I was crossing Broadway in front of the *Herald* building. A crowd of men pushed in three directions. Just as I leapt upon the curb I felt a twitch at my watch-chain, and, looking down the same instant, I saw the chain dangling. The miniature was gone.

Madge.—Oh! oh!

Phil.—Yes, call me names. I shall feel better if you abuse me. For a moment I stood petrified; then I darted back into the crowd, but it was a new one already. The men who had jostled me had melted away in every direction.

Madge.—And the thief among them! I wonder what he looks like! He has my picture.

Phil.—Most respectable-looking. No one would dream he was a thief.

Madge.—You saw him? You followed him?

Phil.—I'll explain. Furious at the thought of your disappointment and my misfortune I determined to search till I discovered the wretch, not realizing the hopelessness of it, and neglecting everything else. I started to wander up and down Broadway and along the cross streets, scrutinizing every person for the man I had never seen. Crazy, wasn't it? But Fate played into my hands.

Madge.—And you recovered the miniature—all this has been only to frighten me! Well, I won't ask you to deliver it up yet; I'll trust you one day longer.

Phil.—How gladly I would give it back now if it were in my hands! But the strangest part of the story is to come. All that afternoon I went about looking—looking, as I've told you, but vainly, and when dinner-time came I went home with a heavy heart. Next morning—yesterday—I set out again, but on a different lay; I went to the pawnbrokers. All denied having seen the locket, but on stepping out of a shop in the neighborhood of Franklin Street a man passed me—a short, stout man, well but plainly

dressed, who wore on his watch-chain my—your miniature.

Madge.—Could you be sure?

Phil.—I asked myself the question as he walked by and answered in the affirmative. I couldn't be mistaken. The case of the miniature is so unique, so original in design—after your own drawing—that I knew it was your's as confidently as if I had seen your portrait inside.

Madge.—The wretch of course removed that! What did you do?

Phil.—I followed him. He entered the *Tribune* building, and I stood by the elevator till he descended. He called at a number of places, I waiting outside in each instance, nervous with anxiety lest he should elude me by a different exit. At last he took a Fourth Avenue car for up-town: I sat down opposite him, my eyes riveted on the miniature. He rode to Nineteenth Street and then walked east two blocks. He walked quickly for a heavy man; twice I nearly lost sight of him, and not daring to risk a third chance I seized him boldly by the button-hole and accused him of his crime.

Madge.—Oh, Mr. Solder, how brave you are! What did he say?

Phil.—He frowned with well simulated innocence. "Are you mad?" said he. "Annoy me further and I'll hand you over to the police." That nettled me, and I proceeded to do what he had only threatened.

Madge.—Arrest him?

Phil.—Yes; I called a bobby, who carried us both to a police-station. The inspector, who was sitting at a table when we entered, arose and shook hands with the thief. How is that for a commentary on our city police? Having listened with polite attention to what my captured villain had to relate, the inspector turned to me. "Are you up here again?" said he; "what new game are you giving us now?" "I only want my own," I replied, but no longer hopeful after what I had seen. "That locket was snatched off my watch-chain yesterday. It is mine!"

Madge.—But it isn't yours, Mr. Solder.

Phil.—I could not say it was yours, Mrs. Mathews. The thief stared me up and down, declaring that he had bought the trinket. On my demanding to know where and when, he obstinately refused to answer, or to open the case to expose the portrait inside. In all these denials he was supported by the inspector, who kept asking what would happen next. Then the rascal shook hands with the officer and made off,

while I was detained for further examination. However, as the inspector could not remember what my last offence had been, he contented himself by warning me not to come up again, and permitted me to go—thankful that I had not been imprisoned or fined for trying to recover my own.

Madge.—*My* own, you mean.

Phil.—Pardon—yes; but I heartily wish it had been my property, Mrs. Mathews. In that case I should not mind half so much.

Madge.—Don't blame yourself; I hold you blameless; and you have had too much trouble over the miniature as it is. Let's talk no more about it, but consult on a gift for Julius. What shall I give him? Something simple, for [*tearfully*], I spent all my money on that miniature.

Phil.—Mrs. Mathews, pardon me; but you will certainly—it would be very ungenerous of you not to. Of course I may return what I have lost.

Madge.—[*Laughing.*] Yes, when you prove to me that you did lose it. Cheer up, Mr. Solder; the unfortunate miniature is not your fault but Julius' misfortune.

Phil.—If you would let me be your creditor that would complete the cure this confession began.

Madge.—Poor fellow! not another word. Julius need never know—

Phil.—How can I make it up to Julius? To rob him of his—

Madge.—Hush!—Julius!

Julius.—[*Tossing book aside and advancing.*] I can't find it anywhere.

Madge.—What have you lost?

Phil.—[*Sotto voce.*] Fie, Mrs. Mathews!

Julius.—A favorite quotation. Why are you standing up, Phil? Going?

Phil.—Yes, I'm off. Good-night, Mrs. Mathews.

Madge.—Must you go? It is not late. Shall we see you to-morrow at the Vanes?

Julius.—Phil can't disappoint a party given in my honor. Hold on, old man; I'll walk to the station with you. By-bye, Madge.

[*Exeunt* JULIUS *and* PHIL.]

Madge.—Good-bye. What shall I give Julius to-morrow? If I could sit up to-night I might finish that slumber robe, but Julius hates embroidered things. How dreadful it is! I could cry! But I'll never tell him another man has my miniature.

ACT II.

SCENE.—The middle-sized house in Irving Place.

Mrs. Vane.—My young lady has disappointed me, and we shall be five at table. Oughtn't we to have asked more people on your birthday, Julius?

Julius.—If you want to make me older than I am; old men have a swarm of friends.

Madge.—Rich old men.

Mrs. Vane.—Madge grows cynical. Isn't this Mr.

Solder of yours something of an original? Will he certainly come?

Madge.—Provided he hasn't mislaid the address or accepted two or three other invitations for this evening, he will be here. Yes, Clara, he is as odd as his name.

Mr. Vane.—Did you find him amusing, my dear?

Mrs. Vane.—[*Aside to* MADGE.] I dare not say 'Yes!' [*Aloud.*] You must form your own opinion, Charles. Now, Madge, let us leave the gentlemen to entertain each other while we call on little Clara. This is her bed-time, when she receives her adorers like a *belle marquise* of the past.

Madge.—They received on getting up.

Mrs. Vane.—You are right, but baby is better trained. Just for a little while, gentlemen.

[*Exeunt ladies.*]

Mr. Vane.—Young Mr. Solder is a tried friend of yours, I presume, Mathews?

Julius.—If ten or more years of unbroken friendship try a man, yes.

Mr. Vane.—Have you known him so long? I understood Mrs. Mathews to say her acquaintance with him dated from this winter.

Julius.—Hers, yes. But Phil and I were college chums. He was not at our wedding because I had

lost his address. But when I met him again we began where we left off.

Mr. Vane.—Always a difficult thing, and sometimes dangerous. Is he a ladies' man?

Julius.—Solder is the sort of man who makes friends with most women and falls in love with none.

Mr. Vane.—I know the species, and I don't trust 'em. You know his friends, of course; are they like him?

Julius.—Who?—oh! I understand. Nobody is like Phil Solder; he is, as you heard, an original; at once light-hearted and serious; full of fun and tender as a child. He likes everybody, but at the same time he has an unerring instinct for picking out the true people to trust.

Mr. Vane.—Do you know his friends? He introduces them to your house?

Julius.—Once or twice he has brought up a friend for a game of cards.

Mr. Vane.—Um—

Julius.—Pardon me for asking what you mean by "um?"

Mr. Vane.—Did I say "um?"

Julius.—Yes.

Mr. Vane.—Well, I don't know.

Julius.—Somebody has been speaking against Phil

Solder, and you regret having asked him here. I tell you the story is false before I hear it.

Mr. Vane.—My dear Mathews, I have not heard a word detrimental to your friend, whom I accept at your valuation. But I am older than you, I think.

Julius.—Of course you are, by many years.

Mr. Vane.—Um!—*any* advantage in years gives me an excuse to advise you. The fact is, I've something unpleasant to say.

Julius.—Out with it.

Mr. Vane.—It may be nothing—or a mistake,—her jest, perhaps.

Julius.—Whose jest? Say what you mean.

Mr. Vane.—That is the way to look at it—a philopena present; or if that's old-fashioned, a bet at cards.

Julius.—What are you talking about? Do you refer to Madge?

Mr. Vane.—Now, be calm; I didn't mean to let it out just yet. Your word—no scene at dinner!

Julius.—Scene at dinner! What is behind such an ominous introduction?

Mr. Vane.—[*Taking miniature from his pocket.*] This.

Julius.—This locket? Why should I make a scene

at dinner about this trinket? You see I hold it in my hand quite calmly.

Mr. Vane.—Press the spring.

Julius.—[*Seeing portrait.*] Madge!

Mr. Vane.—Just so.

Julius.—Ah, I see it all! You make me a birthday gift, and such a gift! My dear Vane, this quite overpowers me.

Mr. Vane.—Stop, sir. You are making a mistake.

Julius.—Eh, what the deuce?

Mr. Vane.—Leave the locket open for a while. I have something to say to you. This is hardly the time or place, but it had better be said now; there's danger in delay. You know how I dread to see dissension enter a happy home.

Julius.—Well, well, you're not the only husband who dislikes quarrelling.

Mr. Vane.—But there are two sides to the question: both husband and wife may be at fault. I speak of a young married couple—

Julius.—Well?

Mr. Vane.—Something may be said in excuse of a wife whose husband is careless enough to bring his friends into the family circle and give them the privi-

leges of intimacy. I contend it is a mistake to widen the family hearth : before it there is only room for two.

Julius.—It was not your intention to read me this domestic homily. Come to the point.

Mr. Vane.—In a moment. I'm not acquainted with your friend Solder, but of him or of one of his comrades you stand in serious danger.

Julius.—Of what nature?

Mr. Vane.—Yes—among them there is one who has profited by Mrs. Mathews' ignorance of the world to lead her into a mistake, venial but deplorable.

Julius.—It strikes me that in talking like this you take undue advantage of your position as my host.

Mr. Vane.—That's all that prevents me from severely censuring your indifference. I've proved my real friendship: at considerable personal annoyance I've stopped the business. It ended as soon as I turned over to you the proof.

Julius.—The proof? What proof?

Mr. Vane.—It's in your hand—the miniature.

Julius.—Take care how you trifle with me.

Mr. Vane.—I hate to shatter your faith, but hear how I came into possession of that locket.

Julius.—Go on; you can't stop now.

Mr. Vane.—First, I must explain that I sometimes pick up a bargain at the pawnbrokers, and a day or two ago I dropped into Uncle Billy's Place on Park Row. He said he had a choice bit to show me, and related how he took it in. A young man had offered it for sale the day before, but as Uncle Billy declined to buy he pledged it. Soon after he had hurried away, the ticket given him was found under the counter, torn to bits. The evidence pointed to this as stolen property. Of course I was debarred from purchasing, but the piece being of curious workmanship I looked it over carefully. It was a locket. I touched the spring—in short, that is the very locket, and that is the face I saw.

Julius.—The face of my wife.

Mr. Vane.—I thought you had been robbed, so I risked buying the trinket, fastened it to my watch-chain, and started for your office to mystify you. Business drove the matter from my mind and I turned home with the charm still at my vest.

Julius.—Pshaw! Is that all your mystery?

Mr. Vane.—No, there's more. When I left the car to walk across to my house a young man accosted me and demanded the return of his property—this miniature.

Julius.—Impossible!

Mr. Vane.—I thought you would see it was time to act. The stranger's audacity staggered me. I refused, and he called a policeman, who walked us both to the station. On the way I hatched my plan: I had no doubt this stranger was telling the truth; nevertheless, I determined not to yield up your wife's portrait without a struggle. Good fortune had it that the inspector on duty was an acquaintance of mine. He discharged me almost without an explanation. I hurried home with my mysterious property.

Julius.—And the stranger?

Mr. Vane.—Ha, ha! the inspector retained him. A good joke, eh, Mathews?

Julius.—Excellent! But a better one is that you should think your proof so convincing. It would take the contents of all the jewelers' shops in New York to make me doubt my wife—even of folly. Pshaw! Circumstantial evidence. Aren't you lawyer enough to know circumstantial evidence has one peculiarity: it can be explained away?

Mr. Vane.—Is it possible? After what I've reluctantly told you?

Julius.—Your judgment is mistaken; my heart is not. I forgive you, Vane; older men than you might

believe these proofs indestructible. I have your story; I have the miniature, and we shall see.

Mr. Vane.—But not here; not now. Remember where we are—your promise. Give me the miniature.

Julius.—And accuse Madge? No, no! [*He attaches the locket to his watch chain.*] I remain your guest only on condition of wearing your proof here.

[*Enter* MADGE *and* MRS. VANE. *They stand near the door, concluding a conversation.*]

Mrs. Vane.—Yes, Mr. Vane is quite too ready to believe all he hears; that is his single real fault.

Madge.—All men are so, Clara dear—finding fault with their wives in little things; but if another should dare they will defend them as you would defend baby, Clara. I'm sure it is so with Julius.

[*Enter servant and* PHILIP.]

Servant.—Mr. Solder. And dinner is served, ma'am.

Phil.—I hope I'm not late, Mrs. Vane; I didn't want to disgrace my sponsors. Mrs. Mathews, I've been busy—you know what about, and I've a clue.

Mrs. Vane.—In excellent time; first let me introduce my husband. Mr. Solder, Charles—Mr. Vane, Mr. Solder.

Mr. Vane.—[*Aside.*] The stranger!

Phil.—[*Aside.*] As I'm a sinner, the thief!

Madge.—Why, you two have met before. Julius, I see by your smile that you knew it. Why didn't you tell me?

Julius.—I suspected it.

Madge.—What locket have you on your guard, Julius? Is it—it is! Mr. Solder, look—my miniature!

Phil.—I'm floored. No, I've a clue—Mr. Vane?

Julius.—Right.

Madge.—My miniature! my present to Julius! where did Mr. Vane find it?

Julius.—A long story, Madge, and a mysterious one. Eh, Vane?

Mrs. Vane.—Then you must tell it at table. Will you come, Mr. Mathews? Charles?

[CURTAIN.]

THE BIG HOUSE

ON

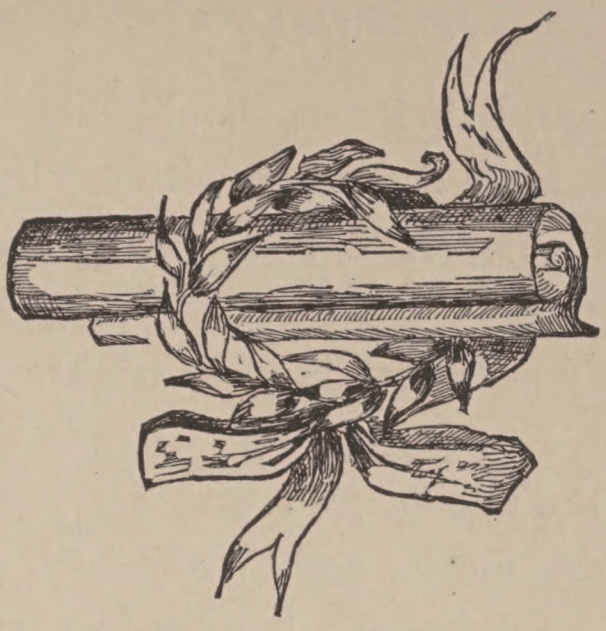
MADISON AVENUE.

Mrs. Adae, ...	a widow.
Clara Adae, ...	her daughter.
George Adae, ...	her son.
Adele Adae, ...	his wife.
Joanna, ...	the maid.
Phil Solder, . . .	a guest of the house.

A GUNPOWDER PLOT.

CHESTNUTS.

THE COMPROMISING LETTERS.



A GUNPOWDER PLOT.

SCENE.—The big house in Madison Avenue: the library. GEORGE seated with newspaper and cigarette. Enter his wife.

Adele.—Are you alone, George? Joanna told me Clara was with you.

George.—She ran upstairs a minute ago with a letter which the postman brought her. I imagine its contents are of an exciting nature. Listen to her! [*Several loud thumps are heard above.*] She'll be through in a minute!

Adele.—Is she jumping the rope? She is not writing, certainly. What is she doing now in a literary way?

George.—Heavens! Adele, don't ask me. I don't know anything about it, but she is scribbling away still, I believe.

Adele.—George, I think we should show more interest in her work, more sympathy with her hopes.

George.—Perhaps. If I laugh at her it is for her own good.

Adele.—But you know Clara has talent.

George.—Yes, I will say I think Clara is bright, but I fear she is on the wrong track with her blood-curdling tales of midnight murder and hair-breadth escapes.

Adele.—Don't tell her so; here's Clara now.

[*Enter* CLARA. *She carries herself very erect, and moves with a measured and stately step.*]

Clara.—How pleased I am to find you both here at this time! George, embrace your sister.

George.—I don't mind. [*He kisses her.*] What's up, Clara? Your eyes are shining, your cheeks flushed; you are radiant, magnificent! Did you have good news in that letter? Has Uncle Joshua died and made you his heiress? What did he leave me?

Clara.—Hush, George, how can you talk like that? Yes: I've had news, great news, brother.

George.—What is it?

Clara.—George, I'm an authoress.

George.—Is that all? Did somebody have to write and tell you that? Why have you been inking your

fingers and spotting your gowns for the last year if you weren't an authoress, or trying to be one?

Clara.—Aye, trying. Now I am successful.

* * * *

Adele.—Oh, Clara, dear, I am so glad!

George.—I congratulate you, sis; let's hear about it.

Clara.—I have had a story accepted by the *Analyst*, and they have written me a charming letter—see.

Adele.—Read it aloud please, George.

George.—Clara, confess that you've been leaping over the furniture in a frenzy of joy.

Clara.—I will do nothing of the kind.

George.—Jumping up and down then.

Clara.—Perhaps I moved around somewhat livelier than usual, or even danced a little. When you read that letter you will pardon a little enthusiasm.

George.—[*Examining letter.*] "To Miss Clara Adams." Is that the way you sign yourself now?

Clara.—Oh, that's a mistake. Read it, George; you open it as though it was a tailor's bill.

George.—Not at all. In that case I shouldn't open it. Well, here goes.

"DEAR MADAM:—It is with genuine pleasure that we write to inform you of the acceptance of your Mss., as it is some time since a story has come to us so original in conception and so charming in style. It will appear in an early issue of the *Analyst*, and we hope to have other and many contributions from your pen.

"Respectfully yours,

"THE EDITORS."

Well, I say that is splendid! Why, I had no idea you had it in you, Clare!

Adele.—Oh, I knew it. I always said she would be famous!

George.—What is the story called?

Clara,—"Irene's Vow."

George.—"Irene's Vow!" What is it like?

Clara.—You have heard it, and—don't you remember?—you didn't like it. Irene's two brothers have been mysteriously murdered. She swears to avenge their death, then discovers it is her lover who has killed them. They were smugglers, and it was in the performance of his duty as an officer that he did so. But it is too late. Irene blows up with gunpowder the building in which he is, although she destroys herself in doing so.

Adele.—Oh, it makes me shudder!

George.—Clare, you don't mean to say that the story you read me last winter, when I made you so furious by ha-ha-ing right out when I couldn't hold in any longer, has been accepted by the *Analyst*?

Clara.—I do say that very thing

George.—And they refer to that story when they express their admiration of its originality, charming style, etc?

Clara.—I have sent them "Irene's Vow" and no other.

George.—You are not joking, and you did not offer that gory tale as a burlesque?

Clara.—Most certainly not.

George.—Well, if I may be pardoned such an expression in the presence of a rising young author, I am completely flabbergasted.

Adele.—Oh, husband!

Clara.—I suppose, because my story does not follow in the old lines which conventionality has laid down and the majority of readers have received as correct, you are surprised that it should be accepted by a magazine of prominence, are you?

George.—That is a very delicate way of describing my state of mind.

Clara.—[*Earnestly.*] I tell you, George, there has been a reaction from the methods which have so long been popular. The school of Howells and James is a delightful one, I admit, but it has had its day. The microscopic inspection of the brain cells—the delicate vivisection of the heart—is a fascinating study, but it is futile and at last wearisome. What people want is the living, palpitating flesh, and the rich, warm blood that flows through it!

George.—And Miss Clare Adae, with dagger and

gunpowder, is going to lay open the flesh, and let the rich, warm blood flow galore. Bravo, Clare!

Clara.—Because "Irene's Vow" is tragic, because the characters all die, you think it sensational—ludicrous. In the sublimest production of an immortal genius there are four persons killed by poison, two are stabbed, the seventh commits suicide, and a ghost walks through all, yet who thinks of calling "Hamlet" sensational?—who would dare to call it ridiculous?

George.—And if Shakespeare can end a play leaving seven dead bodies to be carried out, Miss Adae claims the humble privilege of slaughtering only four. Is that the idea?

Clara.—That is exactly my position, if you choose to express it in those words.

George.—Well, Clara, your arguments are unanswerable; but I can't understand yet how you managed to work that story off.

Clara.—Suppose you give up trying, and listen to my plans. To tell the truth, I don't think "Irene's Vow" is my best work by any means, and I only sent it to the *Analyst* because it had been every place else. Now I am going to begin work in earnest. In the first place I want you to see at once about getting me a

large desk: then I shall want a blank-book, in which I shall keep a record of everything I write—"such and such a story offered such a place," and opposite

I shall write the date of its acceptance and then of its publication.

George.—Would there be a column for the rejections?

Clara.—[*With dignity.*] I trust there will be no need of such a thing now. I intend to work in a busi-

ness-like way. I shall write from nine to one each morning. Anthony Trollope worked a certain number of hours every day with machine-like regularity. Anthony Trollope was not a great novelist, but he was a successful one, and I shall not despise to learn from him.

George.—It strikes me, Adele, that our authoress is quite a liberal-minded young person. What do you think?

Adele.—Indeed, Clara, he does not talk like this behind your back; you should have heard him praising you before you came down.

Clara.—Then I shall want a type-writer.

George.—A type-writer!

Clara.—Yes, and an amanuensis—an operator. I compose best when I am like this. [*She rises and walks up and down.*] Then the thoughts come quick and fast—too fast for me to seize and transfix them with my pen. I must have an assistant. Adele, if you will learn to use the type-writer you may help me.

Adele.—Oh, I should love to if I could, Clara.

Clara.—But no. It would not do, I fear. You are in the family. We should have much to say to one another. No, Adele, it would be pleasant, but even the ties of relationship must yield to the demands of

my work. The woman who acts as my amanuensis must sit dumb—inanimate; she will be part of the furniture of the room; when she speaks it must be only when necessity compels her to answer to my dictation.

George.—I congratulate you on losing the job, Adele. If I were a young woman seeking employment, I would rather rattle dishes than the keys of Clary's type-writer.

Clara.—George, I wish to ask you in all seriousness never to speak of me by that name again. In the first place it is ridiculous to call a woman of my size "Clary." In the next place it is undignified considering my—my—

George.—Position as the coming authoress? You are right, my sister. "Clary Adae's Penny Dreadful." That doesn't sound at all well. I have even thought since you have grown to be such a statuesque young woman that the name of Clara was a misnomer. I used to think you should have been called Diana, or Galatea, but in the light of recent developments I think Lucretia or Messalina would be better.

Clara.—Do you know that I have been seriously thinking of assuming a *nom de plume?*

George.—Why not say a *nom de guerre?*

Adele.—What name would you take?

Clara.—I should take a man's name. Then I could wield a fearless and trenchant pen. I should never stop then to think "What would Mrs. Pomeroy say?" or, "How would the people of our church take this?" as I'm ashamed to say I have done. The name of George has been assumed by two famous women, why should not I be the third? Let me see? George—George Dare. How does "George Dare" sound?

George.—Very expressive, but hadn't you better sit down, Mr. Dare?

Clara.—[*Sitting beside* ADELE.] On the other hand, in preserving one's identity, there's the charm of seeing one's name in print coupled with praise. Fancy reading something like this: "A story in the last number of the *Analyst* has created a great sensation among literary people. The boldness of outline, the warmth of color, bespeak a master hand." Then, "The young authoress, Miss Clara Adae, is not yet twenty;" then would follow a description of my personal appearance, perhaps my tastes and habits, my fondness for horseback-riding and for walking. I should be pointed out on the street, at the theatre, every place. Oh, Adele, darling, isn't it grand, glori-

ous? I am just wild with delight and can't conceal it any longer. [*She throws her arms around* ADELE.]

George.—Oh, I say, Mr. George Dare, I object to

your hugging my wife right before me. And, excuse me, Mr. Dare, but your back hair is coming down, and that last squeeze ripped the sleeve of your dress. Suppose somebody should come in? [*The door bell rings.*] There's somebody now.

Clara.—[*Hastily arranging her hair.*] Adele, I can see no one at all to-day.

Adele.—[*Listening.*] I think it is the postman.

[*Enter* JOANNA.]

Joanna.—A letter and a package for you, Miss, and here is a receipt for you to sign.

Clara.—[*Opening letter.*] Will you sign it, George? It is from the *Analyst.*

[*Exit* JOANNA.]

[CLARA *reads a few lines in silence, then turns very pale, and puts her hand to her head as though bewildered.*]

I don't understand this letter; there seems to be something wrong. Listen—George, Adele. [*Reads.*]

"MISS CLARA ADAE:

"*Dear Madame:*—We have just discovered a most annoying mistake, made yesterday by one of our employees. A letter intended for Miss Clara Adams, was sent to you last night, and a communication respectfully declining your Mss. entitled "Irene's Vow" was sent to Miss Adams. The similarity of names caused the confusion of the letters, which is none the less mortifying and is without precedent in the history of the magazine. So deeply do we feel it

that we have discharged the man who made the mistake, but that, we fear, will be small satisfaction to you. We return "Irene's Vow" with this—"

Oh, George, can it be? Do they mean they are not going to print it?

George.—They can't mean anything else. What an outrageous blunder!

Clara.—Oh, and my hopes, my plans, my beautiful visions! Oh, I shall never write another line. I can

never hold up my head again. Oh—oh—oh-h-h! [*She bursts into tears.*]

Adele.—Clara, dear; Clara, don't. *I* believe in you just as much as ever. And so does George, don't you George?

George.—[*Taking his sister in his arms.*] More than ever. Come, Clare, be a brave girl; it's a hard blow, I know.

Clara.—Oh, George, I've been talking like an idiot, oh, oh—

George.—Don't cry, Clare, you make me feel like a brute after the way I've been laughing at you. Only say the word, Clare, and I'll go down there and crack every neck in the *Analyst* office. [*Savagely.*] I am glad they had the decency to discharge that dolt.

Clara.—Oh, yes, they discharged the clerk—the poor clerk! Isn't that a joke? Ah, it's capital! Ha—ha—ha—ha—ha! [*She laughs violently.*]

Adele.—Oh, George! I believe Clara is going to have hysterics! Oh-h!

George.—Stop that Adele, at once! Do you want me to begin to blubber too? Run for the camphor—no, ring for Joanna, while I hold her.

Adele.—Here is my vinaigrette. Poor dear! she is growing calmer now.

George.—That's right: now fan her while I read that letter for myself. [*He picks up letter from the floor.*] This isn't all of it. There must be another sheet somewhere; you are sitting on it, Adele; that's it. [*He scans the letter.*] Hello! this is not half bad. Open your eyes, Clary, and listen to this:

"We return 'Irene's Vow' with this, as it would be impossible to print a story of its nature in the *Analyst.* We are anxious, however, to atone, as far as is within our power, for this unfortunate error. There are occasional touches in your story—bits of description and character-drawing—which lead us to believe that you are capable of better work. We should be pleased to meet you personally, or to enter into correspondence with you, with the view of advising you in the matter of preparing something which we could accept and publish.

"Sincerely yours,

"THE EDITORS."

What do you say to that, Mr. Dare?

Clara.—George! You are not deceiving me? Let me read it with my own eyes. [*Seizes letter.*] Yes, word for word. Oh, what a relief!

Adele.—Oh, you will try, won't you, Clara?

Clara.—Try! Yes, and I'll do too, if I have any brains at all.

George.—Count on my assistance, Clara, if you need it, and my advice. Let me begin by rolling out every barrel of gunpowder in your study, and confiscating all your weapons.

Clara.—George, I really believe I can please them yet. I was a little bit ashamed of poor Irene, to tell the truth, and no doubt it is all for the best. I have a beautiful story in my head, and I'm going upstairs at once to write a letter to the editor of the *Analyst*. But oh, George! how I wonder who Clara Adams is?

CHESTNUTS.

ACT I.

SCENE I. passes in the room of GEORGE and ADELE, who have been married a year.

George.—If you will not go down shall I have your coffee sent up here?

Adele.—No, thank you.

George.—But you must take something.

Adele.—I don't care for anything.

George.—What is the matter, Adele?

Adele.—Nothing. I wish I were dead.

George.—You always say that after a little unpleasantness. For my part I wish I were dead also.

Adele.—Oh, then I shouldn't wish I were dead.

George.—Adele, do you know what you're saying? Are you tired of me?

Adele.—No, I think not.

George.—Adele, don't you love me?

Adele.—Am I not your wife?

George.—Adele, do you love me?

Adele.—Can I forget? You married me—a poor girl: why, I should love you if only for gratitude!

George.—Gratitude hasn't even a friend. Confess that you are weary of seeing me: I love you too constantly. By the way, I have something to propose.

Adele.—What?

George.—That we begin our courtship over again.

Adele.—Impossible.

George.—Would it displease you?

Adele.—Will you take a new name? Foolish boy! that would make me unfaithful. Suppose I could think of you as I did before we were married?

George.—You admit there has been a change?

Adele.—A change—yes—but—

George.—I don't blame you. Let's speak frankly. A year! that's a long time. Between two Junes there is so much snow and ice it is not strange if some forms over the heart. But we will melt that. You shall be free again to love and to choose. For a month to come I will not be your husband but your adorer, to take or to leave.

Adele.—You will end by making me angry. Have I changed? or perhaps it is you who have changed;

perhaps it is you who wish a month of freedom. Oh, if you do! Take care! you may go too far. You may give me my liberty so completely that I shall never be willing to resume my chains. Oh, George! George! you make me miserable.

George.—Don't cry. Of course I was only jesting—

Adele.—Oh, leave me, George! I wish to be unhappy alone.

George.—Don't send me away. Here on my knee, my pet—we'll cry together. Why, Adele, my angel, did you believe what I said? Did you think I wanted my freedom? I love you now as on the first day —my love, my life!

Adele.—How could you speak so?

George.—How could you believe me?

Adele.—And you did not mean it, George?

George.—My heart! Give it back to me by your lips.

SCENE II.—MRS. ADAE'S drawing-room.

[*Discovers* MISS CLARA ADAE *and* Mr. PHIL SOLDER *sitting near together.*]

Clara.—It seems strange to see you in the morning. I had almost forgotten how you look by daylight. After our brothers and their friends grow up they become shadows in the sun. When night falls and the gas is lighted they resume substance again. Isn't it odd how little we know each other?

Phil.—But Clara—I mean, Miss Adae—the rule works both ways, We men rarely see you till dark; the hour when stars come out.

Clara.—Oh, how pretty! Is it original?

Phil.—I don't know; I suppose so.

Clara.—Then, I don't. Men are always quoting poetry. I wonder why women never do.

Phil.—Don't they?

Clara.—Never. At least never aloud and never apropos.

Phil.—It's because women themselves are poems.

Clara.—What has come over you this morning, Mr.

Solder? I mean, what new reverence for women has suddenly developed in you?

Phil.—I am not so sure it is new. I have always

reverenced woman, and highly rated her value. Women are not in my eyes so many possible wives.

Clara.—[*With a change of tone.*] Aren't they? Please define what you think of women and what you mean by their value.

Phil.—It goes with what I hinted of their originality. Women depreciate that: full many a capable woman in conversation only repeats what some man says, while she reserves her own thought. In literature, also, she does almost the same thing. How many a powerful woman has feared to give forth what is in her except under a masculine pseudonym—

Clara.—[*Rising.*] I am glad to know you have such a high opinion of women. It explains many things; but I must hear the rest another time.

Phil.—Have I offended you? I—I had no intention to speak generally, but on a particular case.

Clara.—I have applied it particularly. It is all very interesting, and you are delightfully frank. Now I must find Adele. We shop this morning, and I hear George coming in. I will leave you with him. Good-morning.

[*Exit* CLARA.]

Phil.—At an unlucky time. What did she think I meant? I am a fool. I came to tell her I love her, and I branch off into a tirade against women who sign themselves George or Charles. But why should Clara take it personally? She doesn't write, does she?

[*Enter* GEORGE.]

George.—The very man I want to see. I came up to beg you to step into the office on your way out; but we can talk as well here—better, for we can't be interrupted by a patient. But what's the matter? You look like a patient yourself.

Phil.—Nothing. I say, Adae, does Miss Adae sometimes write?

George.—For the magazines, you mean?

Phil.—For anything.

George.—Yes, but it's a secret. Have you never heard of George Dare? You mustn't give it away, nor something else I'm going to confide to you. By Jove, Phil, it's like making you one of the family.

Phil.—[*Eagerly.*] Yes, yes; just so. How would you like me to become one of the family?

George.—Well enough. As I was saying, I am about to give you a proof of my friendship by entrusting to you a secret which is very intimate. My wife no longer loves me.

Phil.—My dear fellow!

George.—That is to say, she no longer loves me with the fervor of courtship. Oh, don't pull so long a face.

Phil.—You startled me. I'll laugh if you like.

George.—Keep neutral till you understand. For

some time I've noticed in Adele fits of depression which, if I were not a physician and able to judge that she is well and strong, I should account for on the ground of ill-health.

Phil.—Do you expect to keep on billing and cooing to the end of the chapter? There must be a quarrel now and then to prevent cloying.

George.—Just what I've told myself, so I've invented one or two, and she—

Phil.—Well?

George.—She takes refuge in tears. By heavens, Phil, women are strange creatures.

Phil.—[*Sighing.*] So they are!

George.—It may be that, in the race for patients, I've left her too much alone.

Phil.—That's it; devote yourself to her.

George.—I say, do you think Adele just a little vain? All beautiful women are, you know. Do you think she is a bit jealous of Clara's admirers? She makes herself agreeable when they call.

Phil.—Never to me. Of course, she is friendly and all that—

George.—Oh, you! Are you one of Clara's admirers? Adele probably considers you as the friend of her husband, almost a member of the family.

Phil.—That's it, George; I wish to be one of the family.

George.—All in good time. Yes, that's it; Adele is a little envious of Clara; naturally, you know, and without meaning any harm. She is young; her husband is much engaged, and she must have somebody to talk to.

Phil.—I think you are mistaken. Pshaw! you know it.

George.—Why, no. And I don't blame Adele. But I mean to win her over again; I mean to make Adele love me as if I were not her husband.

Phil.—You mean to recover what you have never lost?

George.—My dear boy, this is to be a comedy; you must get into the spirit of it. Let me sketch the plot. Adele shall really make me jealous: she shall think she's done wrong: she shall be unhappy and come to me for comfort and forgiveness. I will give her both, and we will spend our honeymoon over again.

Phil.—You'd better drown yourself.

George.—Why? It will end well. You shall play the supporting rôle.

Phil.—I?

George.—Yes; so you see there is no danger. I can trust you, and you comprehend my motive. Adele shall love me as a young girl always loves her ideal: she must reflect me—merge herself in me—

Phil.—I was just telling Clara—

George.—My dear fellow, you must not tell Clara or anyone. This is our secret.

Phil.—I wish to marry your sister.

George.—All right. Wait till this is arranged. It

is a serious matter with me; until it's settled I can think of nothing else. Clara is fond of you, I think, but she can spare you for a few days.

Phil.—Then I will explain to her—

George.—No, leave that to me. Clara and you mustn't talk the matter over together. It must appear that you have broken with her.

Phil.—If you were not Clara's brother—

George.—You'd see me hanged first. Good-bye, Phil. Don't let the grass grow under your feet, but begin at once to be the shadow of my wife. Call on her, invite her to the theatre, supper, etc.; invite me too, of course; but leave Clara out, or Adele will think you are doing it all for her. Write Adele notes; send her things—a bouquet or a diamond; send 'em up to-day.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE.—MRS. ADAE'S drawing-room one month later.

[CLARA *and* ADELE.]

Adele.—I have wanted to ask you something for a long time, Clara. What is the trouble between you and Mr. Solder?

Clara.—[*Coldly.*] The trouble? What do you mean?

Adele.—Why do you answer in that tone? Am *I* culpable?

Clara.—Don't let us have a scene over Mr. Solder, dear Adele; he's nothing to me.

Adele.—I am glad to hear it. I have suffered Mr. Solder's marked attentions because I thought, having quarrelled with you, he was seeking to be reconciled through me. Now I know what to do. But—poor fellow! Has there been a misunderstanding, Clara? You used to be fond of him

Clara.—I would make you my confidante, Adele, if I had anything to confide.

Adele.—You make me very unhappy by adopting that tone. Can't I help you? I am ready to do everything; I will tell this gentleman as I have already told George—

Clara.—My dear Adele, you live in a modern world where a married woman has not lost her power of conquest. I don't blame you for being as modern as your neighbor. *Amusez vous bien*, my dear sister-in-law.

Adele.—*Tra-deri-dera.*

[*She goes to the piano and runs her fingers over the keys.*]

Clara.—What do you say?

Adele.—I am trying my voice, dear Clara. Does it disturb your reading?

Clara.—Do not think of that, dear Adele; I promised mamma to spend the evening in her room?

[*Exit* CLARA.]

Adele.—She has gone! So much the better. She is bent on misunderstanding me.

[*Enter* JOANNA, *with card.*]

Mr. Philip Solder! Ask him up Joanna, and take the card to Miss Adae.

Joanna.—Yes, ma'am.

[*Exit* JOANNA.]

Adele.—[*Crossing to pier glass and tapping her hair gently.*] This is persecution! Now I mean to have it out with him. Because he has quarrelled with Clara, is it necessary to pay court to me? I have appealed to my husband, who only smiles. Oh! I am very unhappy. I wish I were married to a man who loved me well enough to be jealous.

[*Enter* PHIL.]

Phil.—Have I the happiness to see you alone?

Adele.—The maid has taken your card to Miss Adae; she will be down in a few minutes, and meantime you must be content to talk with me—an old married woman.

Phil.—I came to see you.

Adele.—Thank you. I am glad to welcome any friend of my husband. And you are George's old friend, aren't you, Mr. Solder?

Phil.—Er—I was— Why, certainly, George and I hit it off very well.

Adele.—You started to say you were his friend once. Let us understand each other, Mr. Solder. I have waited for you to speak, always willing to do my utmost to reconcile you with Clara. Isn't it time for plain-speaking?

Phil.—You are right. Let us speak out. No, I cannot! [*With effort.*] Listen. If there has been a change in the relations between your husband and myself—

Adele.—I spoke of Miss Adae and yourself.

Phil.—[*Without looking at her and speaking as by rote.*]—between your husband and myself, whose fault is it? Is it mine? Is it his? Do not interrupt me, I beg you. A friend of mine has a jewel which

the laws of man forbid him to part with. What are the laws of men? Only an approximation to the laws of nature. I have seen his jewel, and I long to have it for my own, to wear it on my heart. How many years would I serve my friend if in payment he gave me the jewel! But if he refuses, he is no more my friend. Who then will blame me if I take from him by force what I cannot live without?

Adele.—Are you speaking of my husband? What jewel? I don't understand you.

Phil.—You must understand me. Of whom am I speaking, if not of him? Who else has a claim to the jewel I long to wear? Don't stop me now—let me say it all—my heart has been full so long! I have seen you daily growing more indifferent to that man. I have seen you wearying of his society and losing lustre like a gem in smoke. Adele, instead of bidding me be silent, will you not ask me why I never spoke before? Forgive me. It was not easy to break the ties of friendship, but now that you tell me with your own voice you no longer love him—

Adele.—[*Recoiling.*] How far—how far—will your audacity carry you? When did I ever utter that abominable lie?

[GEORGE, *who has come in unperceived, steps forward.*]

George.—Is it a lie, Adele?

Adele.—[*In his arms.*] Oh, George, my husband! Send that man out of the house!

George.—Sit here. He shall not say a word without your permission. But pity me, Adele, and answer. Does he speak the truth?

Adele.—Can you ask me that question while he is here?

George.—Never mind him. Answer me. Have you grown cold to me? Answer as to your own heart, for I am as powerless as it to blame you; say, if the choice lay between that man and me, which would you choose?

Adele.—Neither.

George.—[*Aghast.*] What?

Adele.—[*Rising.*] You are my husband, George: what have I done as your wife to be placed in this false position?

George.—You love me then no longer! But I—I—love you still.

Adele.—How can I believe it, while that man remains in the house?

George.—It is true; we should be alone. Phil, will you leave us together?

Adele.—Phil? Can you still call him Phil? Oh! then, you did not hear all he said.

[*Enter* MRS. ADAE *and* CLARA, *pushing back the library portiere.*]

Clara.—But *we* did. We have heard every word. We were not eavesdropping, Mr. Solder. When your card was brought up I asked mamma to accompany me down-stairs, and we arrived at the door in time to hear your vows. At the door we have stood till now, rooted by horror.

Phil.—[*Wildly.*] Clara! let me explain!

Clara.—Pardon me. I have already heard your explanation. Mamma and I thought it only honorable to enter and tell you we had overheard. Now we may go.

George.—Stay, Clara; do not go till you know the truth.

Clara.—The truth? I know it. You are weak, George. Why is that man still here? Come, mamma.

[*Exit* CLARA.]

Mrs. Adae.—Forgive me, Adele, for keeping

silence; I am dazed. What does it mean? Philip has been our friend so long; I have known him from a little boy and I cannot believe he is base. It sounded to me like play-acting.

George.—So it was.

Adele.—George!

George.—[*Kneeling by her chair.*] Can you forgive me, darling?

Adele.—It was a play?

George.—A comedy.

Adele.—Too tragical for mirth. Then Mr. Solder only spoke the lines of his part. Who wrote the piece?

George.—I inspired it. Adele, why do you look like that?

Adele.—You seem a stranger. I am wondering how in the long years we have known each other I have never dreamed you were so cynical, so cold-hearted. Your little experiment is not an utter failure.

George.—It is you who are strange, Adele; you, in taking this play so seriously.

Adele.—That is how I would have you speak, like a business man, and not in the tones of a lover or a husband. Either would find your plot detestable.

George.—[*In a low voice.*] Adele!

Adele.—[*Walking from him.*] Mother, shall we leave the actors to their well-earned rest?

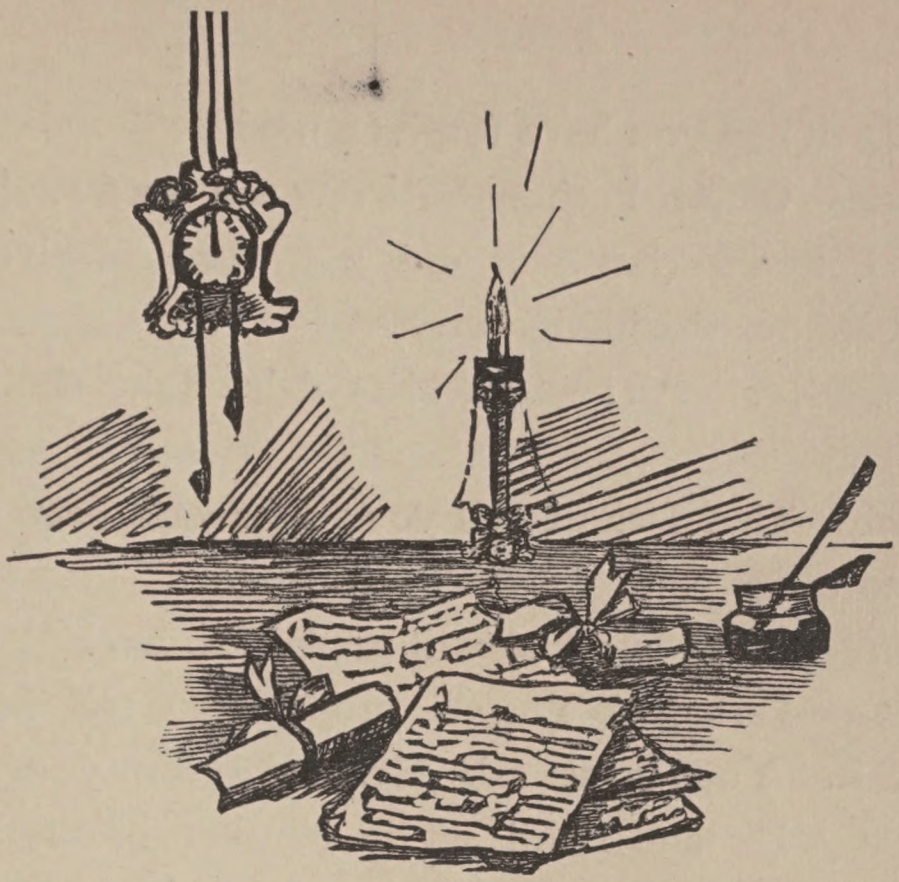
[*Exeunt ladies.* GEORGE *and* PHILIP *remain silent some minutes.*]

Phil.—Cheer up, old fellow. Go after her. A bit of talk will smooth the waters for you. As for me, I've burned my paws with your chestnuts. Clara will never speak to me again.

George.—Clara! Child's-play! She'll borrow the plot for a story. You heard Adele say I had killed her confidence?

Phil.—You can revive it again.

George.—What a bat a man is at best! I hate my plan now that I see it with her eyes. What next? I've lighted my fire, I've roasted my chestnuts, and they're wormy!



THE COMPROMISING LETTERS.

SCENE.—The same as in "Chestnuts." MRS. ADAE'S drawing-room. The morning after the play.

Joanna.—[*Showing in Mr. Solder.*] Which Mrs. Adae, sir?

Philip.—Mrs. George Adae. She is expecting me.

[*He seats himself, takes a book from the table and turns the leaves nervously. Enter* ADELE. *He rises.*]

Adele.—I am glad to see you, Mr. Solder. [*She offers her hand.*]

Phil.—Then you have forgiven me?

Adele.—When I thought over the scene of last night I found that you did not need forgiveness. You were not the instigator.

Phil.—No. Ah!—does Miss Adae take the same view?

Adele.—That I can't tell you: I haven't seen Clara this morning.

Phil.—George and you will explain to her?

Adele.—Perhaps. Yes, I promise to tell her all about it. You must ask Mr. Adae on your own account. He and I will act in concert in one thing only. I presume you can guess what it is.

Phil.—Why, no—I can't.

Adele.—No? It is hardly to be expected that you can enter into my feelings. Nevertheless I have decided to make you my confidant. I have no other. And since you already know so much of our affairs you may as well know the whole.

Phil.—[*Doubtfully.*] Thank you. You may count on my discretion.

Adele.—I thought so. You are an honest man, and my husband's good friend. More than that, you are a man of the world and can advise us how to proceed. When I proposed you to be our adviser, Mr. Adae

accepted you warmly. No doubt you have had some experience in these affairs. You have an interest in a dramatic paper, and the matrimonial difficulties of actors are notorious. You will class mine with them. Indeed, it has a stage flavor.

Phil.—I haven't the least idea what you are talking about.

Adele.—[*In surprise.*] What but our separation? I have had an explanation with my husband. He does not deny that he has aggrieved—insulted me. I have asked for a divorce, and he makes no objection. I speak of that.

Phil.—What are you giving me? I beg pardon, Mrs. Adae, for using slang, but this knocks me silly.

Adele.—So it seems. Unhappily, it is true. Mr. Adae will tell you so immediately.

Phil.—A divorce? Impossible!

Adele.—Why impossible?

Phil.—[*Stammering.*] There's no reason for it—is there? Surely you don't think his innocent stratagem sufficient?

Adele.—Innocent stratagem! Is it so you call an attack on all a woman holds most sacred? her confidence—her love—her honor? But let that pass. It is enough that I feel outraged and insulted. I can-

not honestly live with him longer, and I have told him so.

Phil.—I think I'm dreaming.

Adele.—I'll wake you up. We have called you here this morning, Mr. Adae and I, to take your advice, before consulting a lawyer, on the best way to obtain a separation with the briefest delay and the least noise possible.

Phil.—That wakes me with a start.

Adele.—I suggested your name for two reasons: the first you already know; the second is the outcome of an amusing article by you called "Hymen *vs.* Stars," where you proved the poor god to be impotent behind the footlights. I remember laughing over your illustrations of the ease with which many actresses have broken their shackles, and it occurred to me that perhaps you could show me how to do likewise. Can you?

Phil.—I doubt it.

Adele.—I will let Mr. Adae urge you. Here he comes.

[*As* GEORGE *enters by one side door,* ADELE *leaves by another.*]

George.—Well, Phil.

Phil.—Well, George.

George.—I suppose Adele has told you all about it.

Phil.—Yes. Is she serious?

George.—Apparently. And I am going to let her have her way.

Phil.—Are you both crazy? A divorce on account of your little comedy!

George.—Comedy? It's plain you're a bachelor.

Phil.—Bachelor or benedict, I should know what to do with my wife when she pouted. I should shut her up in her room on bread and water.

George.—You're a brute. Better not let Clara hear you. But I've a better plan than yours.

Phil.—Another comedy? Then count me out.

George.—I don't need you; besides, you are engaged to support Mrs. Adae: do all she asks you, conform absolutely to her desires; suggest some plan by which she can get a divorce, but be sure to exaggerate the difficulties and the scandal. I will second you, and then at the last moment I will step in and—hush, she's coming back.

[*Enter* ADELE.]

Adele.—Are the preliminaries over? Has he convinced you, Mr. Solder, that we are in earnest?

Phil.—[*Sadly.*] Yes. But I can't help you.

Adele.—Why not?

Phil.—Unless you give me the reason that you are hiding from me. Is it incompatibility?

Adele.—No.

Phil.—Cruel and inhuman treatment?

George.—Absurd!

Phil.—Failure to support?

George.—Pshaw!

Phil.—Habitual drunkenness? Desertion? You will answer "No" to all the grounds on which divorce is granted. Mutual consent is not one of them. That's why I can't advise you. I think you are divorceless—at least, in New York.

George.—We might go to Chicago.

Adele.—I remember your press article better, Mr. Solder. It instanced a man and wife who disliked to allege the true motive of divorce. Have you forgotten what they did?

Phil.—My words on my head. They invented one.

Adele.—Can't we do likewise?

Phil.—If George is willing. It is necessary to suppose the husband's misconduct.

George.—I consent to everything.

Phil.—And there must be proofs. George will

have to write some compromising letters, and you, Mrs. Adae, will have to swear that you found them.

George.—You don't mean swear! Adele wouldn't swear to a lie.

Adele.—Why not? Is it worse than to *act* one?

George.—You are right. Go on, Phil.

Phil.—That's all. These letters will be read in court.

Adele.—Out loud?

Phil.—I suppose so.

Adele.—And published in the newspapers? Horrible!

Phil.—No. We can prevent that.

George.—[*Aside to* PHIL.] Why don't you say yes. [*Aloud.*] Of course the reporters will get hold of them.

Adele.—We will buy them off. Mr. Solder, will the letters suffice for a divorce?

Phil.—Amply.

George.—To whom shall these compromising letters be addressed?

Phil.—To nobody—to an unknown. It is sufficient that they are love letters written by you subsequent to your marriage and not addressed to your wife.

George.—Very well; I'll write 'em.

Adele.—[*Astonished.*] You will?

George.—Yes, I'll write 'em now. Suppose we write them together. What do you say? It will be jolly. Still we needn't do it now. There's no hurry, I suppose?

Adele.—[*To* PHIL.] Is there any hurry?

Phil.—No, if you're not in a hurry; yes, if you wish to be divorced quickly.

Adele.—Oh, the quickest possible. Don't we?

George.—Very evidently. But I'd like to ask Phil for some points on divorce. I know nothing about it. What must I do? First, I write these compromising letters; and then?

Phil.—And then—nothing at all. You don't appear, and the decree issues by default.

Adele.—The letters do it all? I don't have to appear in court. Isn't it easy?

Phil.—Pardon me, Mrs. Adae, I only referred to George. With you it is different. As soon as George has written the compromising letters, you take them to your lawyer; he draws up the case and has it assigned for trial. When the time comes you appear in court with your witnesses—

Adele.—Who are they?

Phil.—The letters—silent witnesses in your case. You relate your griefs to the judge—

Adele.—Before all the people?

Phil.—Perhaps we can arrange to have a private trial.

Adele.—[*Anxiously.*] Is it absolutely necessary for me to appear?

Phil.—Absolutely.

[ADELE *reflects.* GEORGE *watches her, with a pretence of carelessness. She sees him and makes up her mind.*]

Adele.—It is not pleasant, but other women have done it.

George.—Yes. There was—

Adele.—Go on, please, Mr. Solder.

Phil.—The lawyer will tell you much better than I can. When you take him the letters he will explain the process in detail.

Adele.—George, please be so good as to write the letters at once. Then Mr. Solder can go with me to carry them to a lawyer this afternoon.

George.—As you please. [*He sits at his wife's secretaire.*] I can't write them on paper with your monogram; haven't you any other?

Adele.—In the drawer at your right.

George.—[*Playing with pen and meditating.*] I say, Phil, must they be long?

Phil.—No, provided they are clear.

George.—All right. You two continue your conversation. If you keep your eyes fixed on me, I can't write a word. It paralyzes me.

Adele.—In the drawer at your left you will find a bundle of letters that you wrote me before marriage. You might plagiarize them.

[GEORGE *starts at this; he feels a queer tightening at his throat; then he thinks of something and smiles. He hunts for the bundle of letters referred to, and with unsteady fingers unties the ribbon that binds them. Presently he begins to write. In the meantime* ADELE *and* PHIL *try to keep up a conversation on indifferent subjects.*]

Adele.—I saw you at the theatre the other evening beside a beautiful woman. Who is she?

Phil.—She is the wife of my closest friend, Julius Mathews.

Adele.—I thought so. I had intended to ask Mrs. Vane to take me to call on her—

George.—[*Choosing his words, murmurs in a low voice.*] "My Angel"—"My Sweetheart"—

Adele.—What do you say?

George.—I was writing.

Adele.—Pardon me. As I was saying, Mr. Solder, I had hoped to meet your friend, but now—

Phil.—That's the worst of it. *Une femme divorcée a toujours tort.*

Adele.—[*Indignantly.*] If she is right she need not care what people think!

George.—[*In a low voice, biting his pen.*] "My Sweetheart"—"My Angel."

Adele.—You don't seem to get on very fast.

George.—I've finished. Here are four letters. They are short, but I think they'll do.

Phil.—Are they to the point?

George.—I believe so. You can read them and judge.

Phil.—Let me see the first one.

Adele.—Read it aloud, Mr. Solder.

Phil.—You've dated it? Yes, all right. [*Reads.*] "My darling, since we have spoken, life seems so lovely to me. Yesterday I felt that I had not an object in the world to live for; to-day I am at the other extreme, caring all for one—for one? for you! And so you really love me a little? poor unworthy me?"

Adele.—"Poor unworthy me" is good.

Phil.—[*Reading.*] "Your love is not thrown away, for when I told you last night I loved you, I deceived you: Maude, I adore you. Your own George." That's not bad; it's well written. But for an action for divorce, it is a little sweet, a little soft.

Adele.—Very much too soft!

George—You are both too quick to criticise. This letter is only the first; it is necessary to lead up gradually.

Phil.—Give us the others, the last one, for instance.

George.—Here it is. [*He moves to where he can clearly see Adele's face.*]

Phil.—[*Taking the letter and commencing to read.*] "Dear"—[*He looks up.*] The name's crossed out!

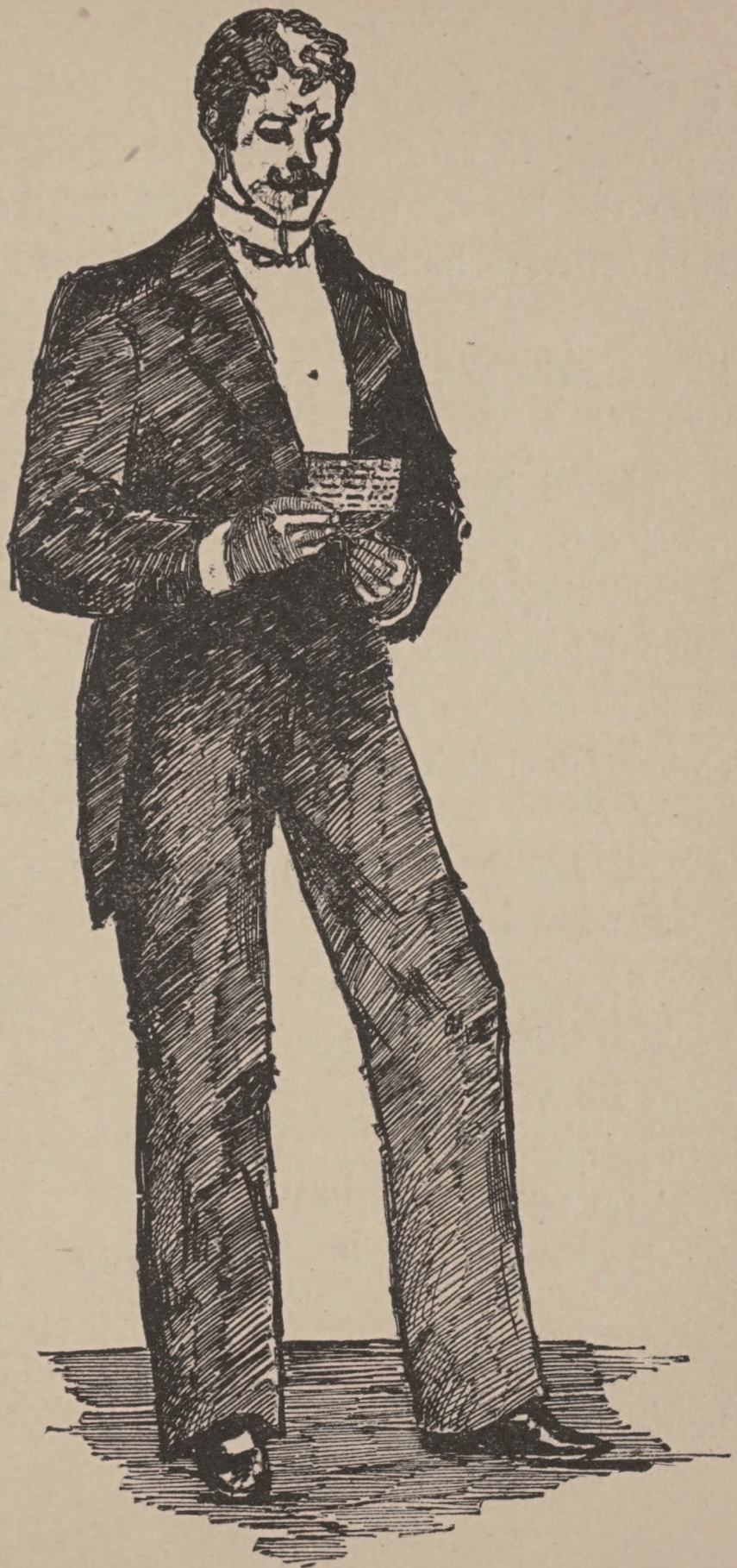
George.—Read on.

Phil.—[*Reading.*] "Are we not to be even friends? Your manner yesterday was constraint and coldness itself. I had a heavy sort of disappointed feeling all day, and when you came to see me, though other people were present, I wondered how you could look in my eyes and not see the heartache there—"

Adele.—George! It is not possible! Is that my letter?

George.—Hear to the end. Go on, Phil.

Phil.—[*Reading.*] "It is by my own wish that we



are no longer engaged, but I am unhappy when I think you are growing to care less for my friendship. Last night I felt this in your manner—was it imagination? If I could cultivate indifference in *my* heart! But I cannot—"

Adele.—Oh, George, how can you? It *is* my letter!

George.—Hand it to me, Phil. [*He begins to read where Phil left off.*]—"and there's the danger. I keep on building little castles and find that I am always planning my life in connection with you. So I go on in some content until a day comes—like to-day, when I feel that I have not your confidence or the right to it."

Adele.—[*In tears.*] You will not use that letter? George, you cannot!

George.—[*Reading.*] "I am not sure I will send what I have written. It sounds so indelicate, and yet it helps me so much to pour out my full heart. And it seems, now, as if I could not go on much longer without telling you the truth—"

Adele.—Do not read the next words—please! please!

George.—[*In a low voice to her.*] Do you remember what the next words were?

Adele.—[*Trembling.*] Yes, yes. Oh, George, forgive me!

George.—I forgive my wife now as I forgave my sweetheart then. Neither time had I anything to forgive, and now as then I bless her for calling me back. But do you really remember what the next words were?

Adele.—[*In his arms.*] "I love you, George—come back to me!"

George.—To-day's message, or last year's?

Adele.—To-day's.

George.—[*Tenderly.*] My wife! And you forgive me?

Phil.—[*Who has possessed himself of the letter, retires to a corner, reading.*] "And it seems now as if I could not go on much longer without telling you the truth—I love you, George—come back to me."

[CURTAIN.]

MARY'S INTERLUDE.

MARY MCGUIRE, . in Mrs. Mathews' service.
GARRY MCGUIRE, . . . her father.

Mary's Suitors.

PATRICK MCNAMARA, . . a policeman.
WILLIAM, ... butcher.
TERENCE, . . in the coal and kindling line.
AUGUST, ... grocer's boy.

JUSTICE, CLERK, SPECTATORS, ETC.

MARY'S INTERLUDE.

SCENE I.—A police court. JUSTICE and PATRICK behind the rail. TERENCE, WILLIAM, and AUGUST near the stove. GARRY in the box.

Justice.—What? Old Garry! It's you again?

Garry.—Agin, Judge Parsons? An' it's not me as complains of seein' ye. Bedad, yer face is a cordal.

Justice.—Oh, well, we're tired of you, Garry. It's shameful! This is the nineteenth time you've been here.

Garry.—My sarvice to ye, judge, an' I'm glad to see ye so frequent.

Justice.—Nineteen times in four years! Hand me the book, Edward. The first offence was in '82, before my time. Drunk and disorderly.

Garry.—'Deed, an' I remember it well. The time of Judge Wheeler, an ould man wid a scrape of hair back of the ears. Did you know him, belike?

Justice.—[*Fingering the record.*] Silence, Garry. Then disorderly conduct, two offences in '83, and six in '84. That was a good year, '84, Garry.

Garry.—'Lection year, judge; 'twas when yourself came in. I voted for ye, judge; I says Mr. Parsons has got such a nice way wid him I'm sure we'll agree.

Justice.—In '85, breaking down and destroying a cigar sign—

Garry.—A bit of fun, judge; no harrum in it. Ould Garry never did harrum to a mortal sowl.

Justice.—That's enough, isn't it, Garry? In '86 you were sentenced to three months for carrying off a dumping cart.

Garry.—You remimber that, judge? 'Twas yerself persided. That time ye was bent on mischief. 'Faith it makes me young agin to think how long we've known each other. Talk about judges, when Judge Parsons goes we'll never see the likes of him in this court again.

Justice.—Silence! Do you mean to keep this up to the end, Garry? Over and over again you fall into the same scrapes. You are an idle, drunken rascal, Garry; and your friends, if you have any, must be worn out.

Garry.—Whisht, whisht! When Garry goes it's not you will cry your eyes out wid grief, anyway. Why should the pair of us quarrel, judge? D'ye mind I keep a civil tongue in me head?

Justice.—As for the present case, do you know why you are here? The scandal you caused yesterday on 125th street—

Garry.—Scandal is it? Ochone! Oh, the lies of them— [*He breaks off on seeing an acquaintance in the court-room draw out his paper of chewing tobacco.*] Are ye there, Mr. Blandy? I'll trouble ye for a mouthful of that.

Justice.—[*Sternly.*] Answer my question, prisoner, and don't occupy yourself with what goes on below. It's no concern of yours.

Garry.—Sure, judge, an' I know Mr. Blandy as well as I know yerself. Never was finer tobaccy than he carries—

Justice.—Silence! Let us get back to the deplorable scene of yesterday.

[*At this moment the tobacco, passing from hand to hand, reaches* GARRY.]

Garry.—Thank ye kindly, Mr. Blandy. Sure ye're deservin' a goold medal. What is it now ye pays for this—

Justice.—When you've finished I'll continue.

Garry.—Quite right, judge. At yer orders, judge. Hu—that's better; that clares my head. Thank ye kindly, Mr. Blandy.

Justice.—Yesterday afternoon the wife of the alderman of the ninth district was walking alone on Seventh Avenue, when you stepped up to her and with unblushing impudence invited her to take your arm.

Garry.—Where is the harrum, my dear? The alderman is a friend of mine, an' his lady might be another. Faith, she's big enough to choose for herself, an' out of politeness inborrun wid a descindint of Irish kings— Listen to the poor crathurs laugh!

Justice.—Garry, turn to the court. You must not speak to the public.

Garry.—Let them hould their mirth, then. Ye are not here to amuse yerselves, ye idiots; this court-room

is the timple of justice, an' ye should draw nigh to it wid serious faces.

Justice.—Garry, for the last time, will you turn about and look at me?

Garry.—Where were we when we lift off? Them poor bodies have made me lose the thread. Oh, thin it was from Irish gallantry I took the lone woman to her door. She said neither aye, yes, or nay—

Justice.—So you attach yourself to this poor lady against her will; boys and idlers get wind of it, and in a trice a crowd forms behind you. Then a police-man appears—

Garry.—Patrick McNamara himself. I'll put a flea in his ear. The spalpeen has lost his chance wid me Mary—

William.—[*From near the stove.*] Hear! Hear!

Terence.—[*Applauding.*] Hurray!

August.—[*In a loud tone.*] Goot!

Justice.—Order in court! He tells you to be off—

Garry.—That's his worrud, judge. An' what roight had the by to interfere?

Justice.—You resist.

Garry.—He laid his hand on me.

Justice.—You fling him a volley of insulting words—

Garry.—Family worruds, judge; but the poor crathur had his oi on me Mary. Who knows but I had taken a drop too much yesterday? It's just possible.

Justice.—It's certain. Well, I must not waste more time. Ten dollars or thirty days.

Garry.—You can't mane it, judge? Where will I get tin—

[*The three young men advance to the box.*]

William.—Let me settle up for you, Garry.

Terence.—This from me mother, ould Garry; it's a good friend she is t'ye.

August.—I have dot loan for you, Mr. McGuire.

Garry.—Blessin's on ye, me bys. I'll take five from the each of yees. That laves me five to brace up on.

Justice.—You're rich in friends, Garry.

Garry.—Only one, bedad, in the world, judge, me daughter Mary; they're all after her. Get a daughter to look to in time o'trouble; that's me advice, judge, an' the top of the mornin' t'ye.

SCENE II. passes in the kitchen of MR. MATHEWS' house in Harlem. Door opening on area.

[*Policeman* PATRICK *discovered beating a restless tattoo with his club.* MARY *appears.*]

Mary.—It's you, is it, Mr. Policeman? What might ye be after?

Patrick.—Yes, Mary, it's me; an' what would I be after but you?

Mary.—I'm beholden t'ye, 34, but I'm not in need of your sarvice. I'll sind for ye when I wishes to be took to the calaboose.

Patrick.—Ye're angered, Mary; an' why for? Faith, if I spoke yesterday to Bridget Blanigan it was on a matter of business.

Mary.—I have nothin' to say at yer spakin' to any leddy, 34, an' so I tells ye widout decate.

Patrick.—As somethin' is wrong wid you, Mary, I'll be movin'.

Mary.—Right ye are, 34; an' I thank ye kindly, for yer face it is physic.

Patrick.—'Tis a sour word to come from yer lips, Mary McGuire, an' me as has had only swateness from the same rosy vehaycle. Oh, Mary, little I thought ye would dagger me heart in this fashion.

Mary.—Be off. Is it bad ye are feelin', Patrick?

Patrick.—No slape for me this night, an' me the whole night on me bate.

Mary.—Faith, it was unkindly done when ye run in the old father but yesterday.

Patrick.—On me sowl, Mary, it couldn't be helped. He had called such a crowd from the stores and houses, they would have complained me number away if I hadn't arristed him; an' how can I win me Mary if me job is lost?

Mary.—Ye've made sad work of it, Patrick—yev'e saved yer job and lost yer Mary. I've promised meself.

Patrick.—To another?

Mary.—To three others. They're within there: d'ye hear 'em disagreein'? Yes, Patrick, I was that angered agin ye that when Teddy said as he'd pay the

fine for the ould father for me promise, why, as me nor Tom, me sister's man, had no money laid by, I promised. An' when William the butcher said the same I accepted, thinkin' Teddy was a bit flighty; an' when August the grocer brought the money I thought as how he was steadiest, an' I gave him me word. Oh, Patrick, they're within there: each man of 'em come for me to name the day, and they drive me nigh frantic wid their clavers.

Patrick.—There's safety in numbers, Mary, me darlin'.

Mary.—Oh, Patrick, I'm in sore trouble, an' if I gets out of this scrape I'll tell everybody as I wants no steady company. God knows I'm better widout.

Patrick.—So ye'll be when I'm yer husband. Oh, there's mischief in yer eye, Mary McGuire; ye know fine what to tell 'em. Are ye goin'?

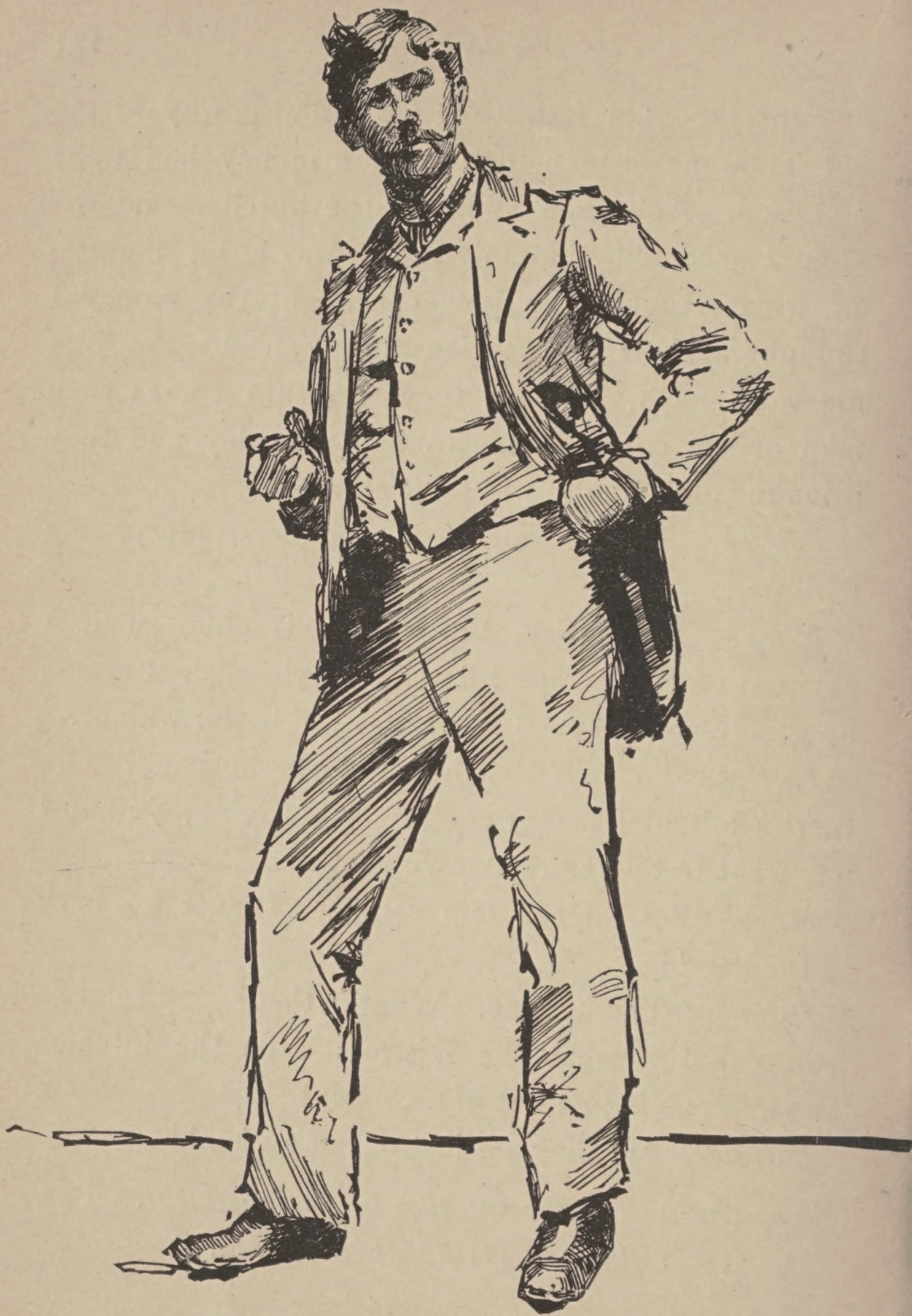
Mary.—Yes. Hear 'em callin'? I must go back to the keesine.

Patrick.—The keesine. What is that?

Mary.—It's what the mistress calls the kitchen. The mistress is just out of a convent.

Patrick.—An' they are just out of a girrul.

[*Scene changes to the interior of the basement.* TERENCE *and* WILLIAM *discovered.*]



Terence.—Now, Bill Smith, havin' dropped them things in the rayfrigerator, I suppose you'll be takin' yourself off.

William.—Not so fast, Teddy, my boy; I'm not here on business, but pleasure.

Terence.—Me pleasure is to throw ye out, aisey-like, by the window.

William.—The door's good enough for me. Say, Teddy, are you setting up to my girl?

Terence.—Your girrul, is it, ye beggarly hash-chopper? Wait and get one when ye start business for yerself.

William.—Peddling kindling, eh, Teddy?

[*Enter* MARY.]

Mary.—Excuse me for kapin' ye waitin', gintlemen. Won't ye sit? The dinner was a trifle later than common this avenin'. An' how do you find yerself, Mr. William? Mr. Terence, ye're lookin' bloomin'.

Terence.—Are ye kapin' company wid him, Mary?

Mary.—What an ambarrassin' question!

Terence.—A little worrud will answer it. [*The area bell rings.*]

Mary.—[*To* WILLIAM.] Wud ye mind lookin' out by the door an' show the gintleman in?

[*Exit* WILLIAM.]

Terence.—Spake up, now.

Mary.—Don't be makin' a fool of yerself, Teddy; Mr. William is no more to me than a friend.

Terence.—It's honey ye spake, Mary, me darlin', an' I'm the bee for gatherin' it.

Mary.—[*Near the door.*] Terence, ye'll dismantle me costume!

[*Re-enter* WILLIAM *with* AUGUST.]

William.—A cop is on the other side shadowing the house.

Mary.—[*With dignity.*] Ye are too upsettin', sir. Welcome, Mr. August. These gints are ould frinds of me family. Kindly put the basket on the table in the rare room, Mr. August.

[*Exit* AUGUST.]

William.—Where did you pick up the Dutchy?

Terence.—Is he here for long, Mary?

Mary.—He's a musical gint. Ye know how crazy them parties are to sing: can ye play, Mr. William? No. Terence, you wonce had the beautiful whistle.

[*Re-enter* AUGUST.]

August.—Vos dot all?

Mary.—Sit here by me, Mr. August. Have ye been to the theaytre this summer?

August.—I goes to the Thalia last week.

Mary.—Indade; did ye pleasure yerself?

August.—I goes out mit the curtain for a beer.

Mary.—Oh, beer! Me physician said it was makin' me stout. Now wid me meals I only take claret an' watter.

William.—Do you keep it down here?

Mary.—Yes, Mr. William—the watter.

Terence.—Ha, ha!

William.—[*Threatening.*] I'll give you somethin' to laugh at.

Terence.—Hould me or I'll clip him wan over the head.

Mary.—Gints, as ye vally the frindship of a leddy! [*Makes a sign to* TERENCE.] One minute; will ye look over the album of frindly sintiments till me return?

[*Exit to rear room, followed by* TERENCE.]

William.—What are you sitting there for, Dutchy? Clear out.

August.—Vos you talking off me?

William.—Vos I talking off an image? [*Aside.*] I wonder what they are doing out there so long?

[WILLIAM *follows to rear room. In a few minutes* MARY *returns alone.*]

August.—You vos there, madchen? Ven vill you be mine frau?

Mary.—Sure I don't know, Mr. August.

August.—But I haf your promise. You vill? [*Tries to embrace her.*]

Mary.—[*Eluding.*] Yes, yes; on one condition.

August.—Vot vos dot?

Mary.—That you will go at twelve o'clock the night after Friday to the ould Chancy plot behind the tiniments on One Hundred and Thirty-second Street; ye'll climb over the wall, an' there ye'll find a dead man with a mourner houldin' a wake over him, lyin' on a flat stone nigh the gate. Ye'll take him by the heels an' pitch him over on the grass.

August.—Nein, nein! I vos never do dot.

Mary.—Very well then, Mr. August; then ye can walk yerself home.

August.—To pitch dose mourner bring pad luck.

Mary.—No, no; the dead man. You can go as the ould wan wid spangles an' a long tail—

August.—Yaw, likes Mephistopheles in dot beautiful "Faust."

Mary.—No, no; loike the ould wan.

August.—Goot, goot. I does it.

Mary.—What! you promise?

August.—This night I does it.

Mary.—Not to-night. Saturday night at twelve. Mind! There's me mistress comin'! Be quick, Mr. August; this way!

[*Exit* AUGUST.]

Faith, me heart's as light as a bird to see the last

of them. [*A policeman whistles.*] Comin', Patrick! Sure he'll laugh at the news I've to tell him.

SCENE III.—Night: an abandoned graveyard; a high gate in the background; in front, a path bordered by shrubs, winding among broken marble slabs, fallen headstones, etc.

[*Enter* WILLIAM, *moving cautiously.*]

William.—This must be the stone. Ugh, how scary this place is! fit for spooks, if there are such. Of course there are. Who spoke? Pshaw! it was my own voice. Thank goodness, I needn't stay here long; half an hour, and as much less as I care to shorten it. There goes a clock—just twelve. Now to lie on the stone, face to the stars. It's clammy. A strange notion for a girl to get in her head, to promise to marry me if I would lie half an hour on this stone. I must be far gone on Mary to do it; but she is a fine girl, only too romantic by half, and with too many fine-lady notions. I'll soon take them out of her when we're married. I wonder if anybody watches this place; if so it's to be hoped he won't see me; he'd arrest me for a grave-robber sure. There's the watchman now. Oh Lord!—he may pass with-

out seeing me. Why, it's Teddy! If he comes this way I'll give him a jump.

Teddy.—Here's the stone—and, bedad! here's the corpse! Poor divil! dead an' homeless, an' widout a mourner to sit by an' comfort ye! It's my Mary as has a feelin' heart: many a wake we'll have in the house after the weddin'. I'll jist sit down at the head of him, an' take a nip o' the crathur. [*Drinks from a bottle.*] I feel more sorrowful a'ready. Ah! it's the proper stuff for them that's left behind. What a pity the poor divil can't take a wee nip an' be sociable! I'll offer it to him as a forrum. [*Holds bottle to* WILLIAM, *who drinks.*] Be jabers, you're thirsty! Half the sperrit's gone widout a word o' thanks!

William.—[*In a sepulchral tone.*] Bless you, friend!

Terence.—[*Starting up.*] Howly saints! it's alive!

William.—Dead; but fear nothing; I will not harm you. Your name is Terence.

Terence.—Right you are.

William.—In the kindling line.

Terence.—Coal an' kin'lin'. But ye'll not be needin' them.

William.—Peace! This is no hour for jesting. I have advice for you.

Terence.—I'll lift the hankercheef off your face to aid yer spakin'.

William.—At your peril! Moisten my lips with the liquid you held there a moment since. What is the name of the cordial?

Terence.—[*Obeying.*] It's—be jabers! he's finished it. He's the ghost of a sponge!

William.—I feel easier now. List; are your teeth chattering? Your name is Terence—

Terence.—At your sarvice.

William.—You love a maiden; beware!

Terence.—Mary McGuire, housekeeper below here. In a fortnight she'll be Mrs. Terence—

William.—[*In his natural voice.*] You lie, you penny coal-dealer!

Terence.—Is it the loie you give me? Then take —begorra, what's this?

William.—Heavens! am I dead after all? Teddy, stand here between us, as you value your soul.

[*Enter* AUGUST, *dressed in the garb of Satan; a red cloak thrown over his shoulders, horns on his head, and a tail lashing out behind.*]

Terence.—Make pace wid him, poor speerit; I'm off. I'll burn a candle for ye come Sunday.

William.—[*Catching him by the arm.*] Don't go, Teddy; be a man! Lie down—down here by me, and the thing may not see us.

Terence.—Faith, the owld gentleman has eyes in his tail. Let go me arrum, ye divil, or I'll be guilty of strikin' the dead.

William.—Don't go, Teddy, don't go! Crouch down! Too late! it sees us. Make the cross afore him! Avaunt! To the pit! Oh, murder, his eyes are two coals!

August.—[*Advancing upon them.*] Wozu der Lärm?

Terence.—What's that he says? Don't look at me; there's your man—

William.—Shut up, you noisy fool! What do you tell him that for?

Terence.—Hands off, Satan; you don't want me! It's Terence, the poor divil that sells coals by the bushel—

August.—Wozu der Lärm?

Terence.—Let go my arrum, as he bids ye.

William.—Is that what he says? Then it's all up with me!

[AUGUST *advances, lays hold of* WILLIAM *by the feet, and pitches him head foremost on the grass.*]

August.—[*Reciting.*] Ich habe doch recht.

William.—[*Rising and brandishing his fists.*] I won't take that from the devil or any man. Come on, and let's see where you come from. Who sent you here?

August.—[*In his natural voice.*] I comes of mine own free vills.

William.—Why, Ted, it's Dutchy; it's August! Let's give him a brush. Take the tail, while I pummel this end. At him, Teddy; make him eat his own brimstone!

August.—Hellup! Hellup!! Id vas all a choke. Gif me up; I harm nopody.

Terence.—I'm achin' to kill the divil, now I find he's not Irish.

William.—Don't kill him, Teddy. What should we do with the body?

August.—Don't gill me! Id vas all a choke of mine frau, Mary.

Terence.—Hit him agin. Here's another twist to his tail. She's no frow of yours, Dutchman! What be ye screamin' for? No one can hear ye.

[*Enter* PATRICK MCNAMARA, *with two other Policemen.*]

Patrick.—Will ye listen to the row of them? A shindy in the graveyard! Come out o' this! Terence McGinnis, s' help me! I'm ashamed o' ye, Teddy, drinkin' in the graveyard.

Terence.—[*Sheepishly.*] I was wakin' the corpse here.

Patrick.—It's mad he is. And young Smith, what are you doin' here?

William.—Oh, that's all right. I'm not carryin' off a tombstone.

Patrick.—[*Examining* AUGUST.] The Dutchman, too. Been to a masquerade ball, Sauer-kraut?

August.—[*Dazedly.*] Wozu der Lärm?

Patrick.—My arm is it? Here it is, and a stick wid it. They're all clean mad. Ye can go back to your beat, boys [*to the other policemen*]; I can take care o' the three o' them, if they walk along peaceable.

[*Exeunt two Policemen.*]

Terence.—Where are ye takin' me?

Patrick.—To the station-house, to keep ye from catchin' cold.

Terence.—Sure ye wouldn't lock up an ould friend.

Patrick.—It's me duty, not mesilf. Here's the gate. An' how did you boys get inside? Sure, it's easier to

get in than to get out, as we say of the station-house. Here we stand in the street, an' I give to each man o' ye a choice—to spend the night in the cage, coolin' yer love-sick brains, or to dance wid the best fut foremost at my weddin' come Sunday fortnight.

William.—The dance is good enough for me.

August.—Come, take a peer.

Terence.—Is it Bridget Blanigan, belike?

[MARY *and her father have been in the shadow of the gate. They move forward.*]

Mary.—It's Mary McGuire. Sure, Terence, you'll forgive the Mary you've known for so long. Mr. William, you'll find when I lave me place, that I've spoke a good word for you there; and Mr. August, I've had it on me conscience to confess that I've no voice for singin' at all.

Garry.—No more than a worrum. Cheer up, byes! Patrick has promised to pay back the bit money ye lent me, as well as to care fer the ould man all his life. So if the girrul has disappinted ye, it was her duty as a daughter to save ould Garry thrubble by takin' a husband on the force.

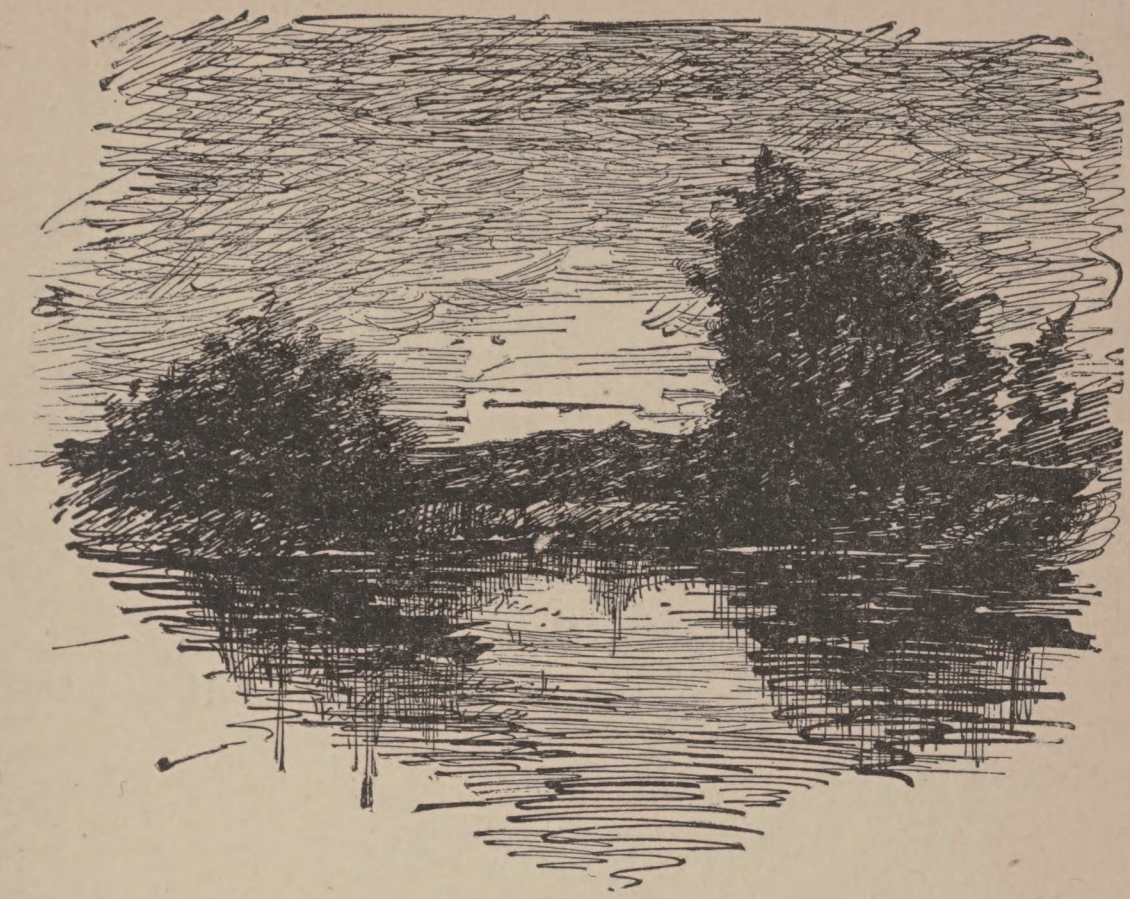
Mary.—Whisht, father! we must be goin'! Gintlemen, ye have lightened my heart by partin' widout

anger, and if each has the mate he desarves, she'll be finer an' rosier than Mary McGuire. Good night, an' me blessin'! Are ye comin', Patrick?

[CURTAIN.]

A LAND BREEZE

The characters have already been introduced to the reader.



A LAND BREEZE.

IN THREE SCENES.

SCENE I. passes in the dining-room of the Grand View Hotel.

[MR. *and* MRS. VANE *at a table set for six persons.*]

Mrs. Vane.—We are the first down, as I told you we should be. What a good appetite you have!

Mr. Vane.—Should have; I eat once a day. Coffee and bread for breakfast, bread and milk for luncheon: ought to be hungry for dinner.

Mrs. Vane.—Is New York under a famine?

Mr. Vane.—Humph! Why is the table set for six? Have you met any new young men?

Mrs. Vane.—I wish I had for Miss Adae's sake; she needs brightening up.

Mr. Vane.—Why? She isn't married.

Mrs. Vane.—What a bear you are! Charles, isn't that Mr. Solder—Julius Mathews' friend, you know? Of course it is. Signal to him.

Mr. Vane.—[*Obeying.*] What for, Clara?

Mrs. Vane.—Two reasons. One is myself and the other is Miss Adae.

[PHIL *comes up.*]

We are charmed to see you, Mr. Solder. Won't you dine at our table? Oh, there is plenty of room—this chair by me. When did you arrive?

Phil.—I came down by the five-o'clock boat. Mrs. Vane, sea air is doing what Holy Writ incredulously queries about.

Mrs. Vane.—Improving my looks? That is an ill-turned compliment.

Phil.—Painting the lily. How are you, Mr. Vane?

Mr. Vane.—As well as I can be—away from home.

[MISS ADAE *is shown to her place. She starts on seeing* PHIL.]

Mrs. Vane.—Isn't your mother going to join us? Our party has been agreeably enlarged, as you see, Miss Adae. Allow me to present Mr. Solder. Miss Adae, Mr. Solder. But you have met before?

Miss Adae.—When did you come down, Mr. Solder?

Phil.—Last month. I mean to-day, by the five o'clock boat.

Mrs. Vane.—[*Laughing.*] How funny! You were thinking of something else.

Mr. Vane.—Perhaps he was jilted last month—eh, Solder?

Mrs. Vane.—[*Hastily.*] Why, Charles! I hope you will stay, Mr. Solder, and admire the place and convert my husband. He does not care for the shore, and I brought him here almost by violence, instead of meekly accompanying him as usual to my mother's place near Stamford. Shall you stay long?

Phil.—I cannot tell: business may call me back at any moment.

Mrs. Vane.—Oh, business! How I envy men that infallible excuse, always available and negotiable! When men are dissatisfied with a place or a person they are never at a loss to get away; but let a woman choose anything rashly, such as a summer resort, she must stay the time allotted or devise a hundred ex-

cuses—the climate, the bathing, the company, her health; she has a long roundabout route to retreat. However good the reason may be for changing her mind, because it isn't business the world calls it fickleness.

Phil.—You have used the strong word, Mrs. Vane—fickleness! It dominates business and all things. Don't you think so, Miss Adae?

Miss Adae.—Pardon me; I was not listening.

Phil.—Do you hear, Mrs. Vane? What man would hazard that reply?

Mr. Vane.—Fol-de-rol. I would; I wasn't listening either.

Mrs. Vane—Charles! But no matter. Are you going, Miss Adae?

Miss Adae.—If you will excuse me; mamma is not well.

Mrs. Vane.—Won't you join us on the piazza?

Miss Adae.—I think we cannot to-night; but it is as mamma pleases *Au revoir!*

[*As* MISS ADAE *passes,* PHIL *rises and turns to her.*]

Phil.—[*In a low voice.*] May I see you for a moment, Clara?

Miss Adae.—I fear not, Mr. Solder.

[PHIL *resumes his seat.*]

Mrs. Vane.—If, like me, you do not care for coffee, Mr. Solder, we might go out to watch the moon rise; Charles will join us soon.

Mr. Vane.—Pardon me; I am ready to accompany you now.

Mrs. Vane.—That is nice. While you light your cigars, I will run up stairs for a wrap. I won't be two minutes.

SCENE II.—The beach in front of the hotel.

[PHIL SOLDER *pacing back and forth: at a second-story window* CLARA ADAE *appears.*]

Clara.—Is it you, Mr. Solder?

Phil.—Yes, Miss Adae.

Clara.—Won't you let me excuse myself now for not coming down this evening? I do not wish to appear unfriendly. Mother and I have just finished packing; we leave in the morning,

Phil.—Going away?

Clara.—To-morrow morning; so good-night is good-bye.

Phil.—I would have spared you the trouble. I go back to New York to-morrow.

Clara.—Oh, you are mistaken.

Phil.—Am I never to see you again alone? Clara, I must speak to you. I have spent my time since I saw you last pondering on what I should say when we met, and now you refuse to listen to me.

Clara.—Of what benefit is talking to either of us? I do not refuse to listen to you; but do not speak of that!

Phil.—How can you ask me to be silent? You refuse to listen to me by prohibiting that subject. I can't speak on any other.

Clara.—You need not tell me again you found out your—your mistake in good time. I understood you before.

Phil.—Heaven knows how you understood what I never said. I am forced to think you chose to put that construction on my words. Clara, do you know what rumor brings me here? Tell me it is false—tell me you are not engaged to Granger! You can never have promised to marry a man twice your age!

Clara.—I beg you, Philip, to speak low; my mother is in the next room waiting for me: I can only say good-bye.

Phil.—Good-bye forever?

Clara.—Forever.

[Mr. VANE *puts his head out of the third-story window, over* MISS ADAE'S *room.*]

Phil.—Then the report is true. It cannot be. I love you, and I will not lose you. Tell me it is not true!

Mr. Vane.—[*Overhead.*] Oho! this is mighty entertaining.

Phil.—I'll make it false; I'll follow you and save you from him.

Mr. Vane.—[*To himself.*] That's the right talk, young man; she'll weaken.

Clara.—Don't talk so wildly, and don't interfere in what is no concern of yours.

Phil.—It is my concern; I repeat, I am determined not to lose you—

Mr. Vane.—Spoken like a major. Keep it up.

Phil.—No man shall come between us—

Mr. Vane.—Exactly what I said and still say to Clara.

Phil.—I'll prevent him with my life. What is my life anyway without you?

Mr. Vane.—[*Waving his cigar.*] That's it, that's it. Now say something about drowning yourself. I did. And—hee, hee, the ocean is just behind you. I was like that. All lovers are alike.

Phil.—I say it's absolutely worthless, and I swear—

Clara.—You will compel me to treat you like a stranger. Cannot we be friends? Be sensible and generous.

Mr. Vane.—[*Peering down.*] What's she saying? I can't hear, but I wager she is giving in.

Phil.—I can be generous with everything of mine except you.

Clara.—Most men are generous with what is not their own.

Phil.—You are mine, Clara!

Mr. Vane.—[*Leaning farther out of the window.*] Clara! did he call her Clara?

Clara.—Listen to me, Mr. Solder. You know well that I once esteemed you highly, but even when we met oftenest it was apparent that we were not quite congenial. Then one day you asked me if I thought marriage to be the highest sphere of woman, or if I did not agree with your opinion that in life as in literature a woman lost her identity by taking a man's name. I construed your question as every girl would construe it. By thinking it over I have come to accept your view; what I write now I sign with my own name.

Phil.—I have thought too, and come round to your

idea. George Sand and George Eliot are my favorite authors now.

Clara.—Then we are still of different opinions.

Phil.—There is only one opinion about the fact that I love you. Are you angry when I tell you?

Clara.—I would rather you did not shout it to the whole beach.

Phil.—I don't care who hears me. I am not ashamed to love you. I have told everybody so but you. I should have told you so on the unlucky day you refer to, but you refused to hear; a hundred times since, but you avoided me. Now I know why. It wasn't because I attacked women-writers; it wasn't because you despised me for the rôle George made me play. Shall I tell you why you avoid me? I am poor, and he is rich. You can't give up luxury. That's the whole story.

Mr. Vane.—[*Leaning over.*] Another man in the case! A reg'lar opera!

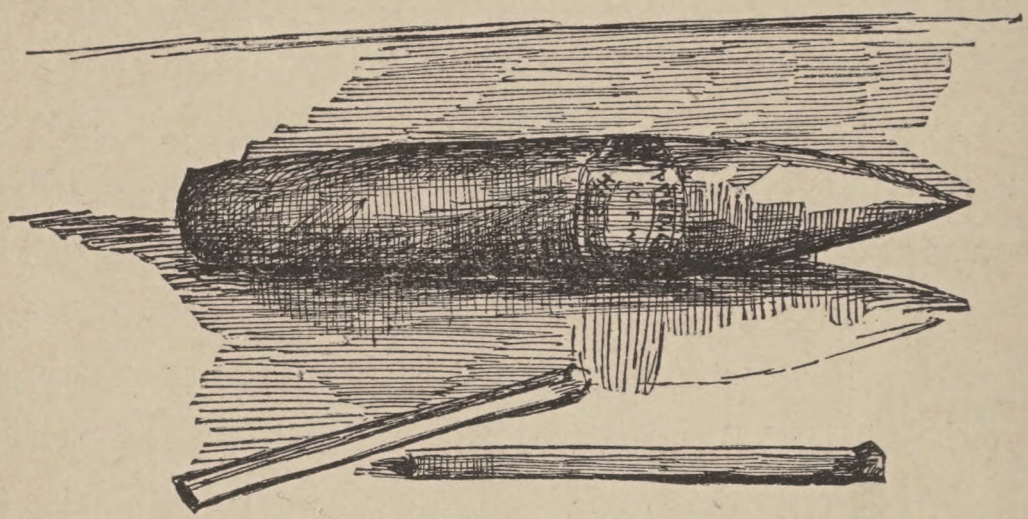
Clara.—Mr. Solder! I can't talk any more. Good-night.

Phil.—Don't go, Clara! A moment more. Clara, forgive me!

Mr. Vane.—[*Brandishing his cigar.*] He does call her Clara! Clara who?

Phil.—One word, I implore you! if not for my sake then for the sake of that old man. He thinks you love him. Tell him it is not so; don't deceive him longer: if he is not wholly sordid he will give you up.

Mr. Vane.—[*He has been leaning far out trying to locate the room beneath him. He jams his cigar-head*



down on the window case.] Give her up! Give up the mother of my child! The man's a villain.

Phil.—Confess you love me—you do love me, Clara! In a hundred ways more eloquent than speech you've told me so.

Mr. Vane.—She's told him so a hundred times! Ah!

Phil.—Tell him so too, or if it is embarrassing let me tell him. I will say we have loved each other

long: I will say how foolishly we fell out. Shall I go to him, Clara? I could laugh to think how I shall save you from that suspicious old man.

Mr. Vane.—My wife's words a thousand times. Don't bother about coming up, young man; I'll come down to you! A moment—she's speaking again. I wish I could hear what she says.

Phil.—Ah, Clara, we shall be happy again, shall we not? Happy as we used to be? Do you still keep sacred that tiny sofa only big enough for two, that stood under the nopal?

Mr. Vane.—[*Picking up his extinguished cigar and drawing on it furiously*]. I recognize that sofa. I'll burn it to-morrow.

Phil.—Why don't you answer, Clara? Are you still there?

Clara.—Oh, do not speak so loud—softly, or I must go in. I cannot guess where the rumor you have heard started from. Do you really care so much for me, Philip? We do not go away till late to-morrow.

Phil.—Will you be on the beach by nine? You have made me so happy. Oh, my life! I knew you couldn't care for that old man—

Mr. Vane.—Old man! I ought to have been down

there long ago. Old man! I'll confront Clara at once.

[*He dashes window down. A soft scream, and the window below closes. Then silence.*]

SCENE III. passes in the corridor of the Grand View Hotel.

[MR. VANE *discovered, knocking at a door.*]

Mr. Vane.—Clara!

Mrs. Vane.—[*Within.*] Yes. Wait till I light the gas. [*She opens the door in her robe de chambre.*] What is the matter, Charles?

Mr. Vane.—[*Struggling to command his voice.*] Matter, madam! Is that the dress in which you receive company?

Mrs. Vane.—I've had no company. I put it on for coolness. Do you object?

Mr. Vane.—[*Grasping the door knob.*] Aren't you ashamed to look me in the eye, Clara Vane? I'm an old man, and sordid, and you've told him a hundred times that you love him! Oh, this is worse than I suspected!

Mrs. Vane.—[*Preparing to close the door.*] I don't know what you're talking about. Are you mad?

Mr. Vane.—Yes, I'm mad. Who wouldn't be with my provocation? Leave the door alone, madam; I haven't finished yet. I won't either till I've unmasked you!

Mrs. Vane.—What is it Charles? I never saw you like this before. What have you heard?

Mr. Vane.—[*Hissing.*] Madam, I've heard all!

Mrs. Vane.—Oh, you've been drinking. Charles, I beg you to go calmly to your room: don't alarm the house and scandalize me. Go to bed, and we'll talk it over quietly in the morning.

Mr. Vane.—No we won't. We will talk it over now. Let me in, I say!

Mrs. Vane.—Never, in your condition!

[*She nearly succeeds in closing the door.* MR. VANE *tries to calm himself and whispers through the crack.*]

Mr. Vane.—Clara, don't drive me to extremity. I've been terribly shocked. I must speak to you at once or do something desperate.

Mrs. Vane.—[*Throwing door open.*] You've heard from mother that baby Clara is sick, and you want to reproach me for leaving her. I was wrong, I own it! I own it! Tell me the worst at once.

Mr. Vane.—[*Planting himself on the threshold.*] The child's all right. What I have to say is not alarming, it's amusing. It's about Mr. Solder; he hasn't gone to bed.

Mrs. Vane.—Hasn't he? That oughtn't to keep you up.

Mr. Vane.—No, I knocked at his door a moment since, and seeing it open, I stepped inside and found him gone.

Mrs. Vane.—I suppose he's on the beach.

Mr. Vane.—I suppose so.

Mrs. Vane.—Wherever he is, I think you may rest easy. Young men don't retire with the regularity of married men.

Mr. Vane.—Oh, don't they? Who told you that?

Mrs. Vane.—Charles, what have you come to say?

Mr. Vane.—Oh, yes, my story. It's deuced amusing. You see I was sitting at my window finishing a cigar, when I overheard a conversation between Mr. Solder and a person of the opposite sex. He made a passionate declaration, and she—ha, ha!—she threw him over.

Mrs. Vane.—You don't tell me! I wonder who she was?

Mr. Vane.—[*Grimly.*] I wonder.

Mrs. Vane.—Suppose it made him desperate? He may have gone and thrown himself into the ocean. Charles, it is your duty to look for him. Oh, isn't it interesting?

Mr. Vane.—Very interesting.

Mrs. Vane.—He may have gone back to New York.

Mr. Vane.—He will have to swim, as there's no night boat.

Mrs. Vane.—And that's what excited you so? I never gave you credit for so much sentiment.

Mr. Vane.—[*Aside.*] Are all women liars? [*Aloud.*] Clara!

Mrs. Vane.—Well.

Mr. Vane.—Coming along the corridor, I heard voices in your room.

Mrs. Vane.—Voices? I am alone.

Mr. Vane.—I heard your voice.

Mrs. Vane.—No doubt; I was praying.

Mr. Vane.—My God, Clara! are you utterly shameless?

Mrs. Vane.—[*With flashing eyes.*] Charles Vane, what do you mean? How dare you speak to me like that? Ah! I comprehend; this is more of your unreasonable jealousy, from which I have always suffered. You think it is I who have driven Mr. Solder to

suicide; you think it is I who threw him over! That's the meaning of your remark about my dress. Where have you been eavesdropping, sir?

Mr. Vane.—At my window. I saw him on the beach looking up at yours. I could hear all he said, but I could not hear your replies. Tell me what you said when he urged you to deceive me no longer—to confess all to me and to beg me to give you up. Answer me.

Mrs. Vane.—I will not answer.

Mr. Vane.—You will not? You will; do you know who I am, madam?

Mrs. Vane.—Are you sure it was Mr. Solder who said all that to me?

Mr. Vane.—Oh, now you want to shield him? That's the first step. Yes, madam, I am as sure of him as I am that yours was the window to which he addressed his vows.

Mrs. Vane.—So you're sure of that! And you say Mr. Solder was on the beach?

Mr. Vane.—Of course he was. Can I doubt my own eyes?

Mrs. Vane.—I can make you doubt them in a minute. A word first. You remember what I told you. I am weary of spending my life in brushing away your

doubts. I am weary of breathing an atmosphere of suspicion. I would rather separate from you at any cost than to endure it longer. Yes, I am in earnest. I give you your choice: believe me when I tell you I have had no communication with any person, man or woman, on the beach to-night, and I will try to forget this ridiculous scene. Doubt me, enter this room and convince yourself, and I will go home to my mother to-morrow. Which will you choose?

Mr. Vane.—[*Doggedly.*] I'll go in.

Mrs. Vane.—[*Stepping aside.*] You dare? Persevere and take the consequences!

[MR. VANE *enters the room; she remains at the door.*]

Mr. Vane.—[*Within.*] This is strange! I had forgotten that you changed your room to-day. This room doesn't look on the beach at all: the window gives on the court!

[*He comes back looking very crestfallen.*]

I am a fool! I—I—don't know what to say for myself. Clara, forgive me!

Mrs. Vane.—[*Waving him out.*] Are you satisfied? Then, good-night.

Mr. Vane.—Clara! Don't send me away so. Let me explain.

Mrs. Vane.—[*Shutting the door.*] Permit me to retire: it is late. To-morrow I shall join my mother. No, don't speak. I'm worn out. Good-night. [*She locks the door.*]

Mr. Vane.—[*Beating on it.*] Clara!

[*Enter* PHILIP.]

Phil.—Hello! you up too. Horribly stuffy in these tiny bedrooms. I've been out on the beach for a breath of air.

Mr. Vane.—[*Retreating.*] It is hot—a land breeze—my wife prefers them—think I'll go to bed. Good-night!

Phil.—[*Looking after him.*] Queer old boy that! I wonder if he sometimes takes a drop too much.

[CURTAIN.]

THREE GUARDSMEN.

Introducing two new characters, Columbia College boys:

JOHN SYLVESTER,
HARRY WALLACE.

THREE GUARDSMEN.

IN TWO ACTS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Fifty-ninth Street, New York.

Phil.—[*Lifting his hat.*] Good afternoon, Mrs. Vane.

Mrs. Vane.—Why, Mr. Solder! I thought you were still at the shore. How are Mr. and Mrs. Mathews? When did you see them last?

Phil.—If I may walk along with you, I'll answer every one of your questions.

Mrs. Vane.—With pleasure. It is so grateful to meet a person who is cheerful, nowadays. All the world is so depressing.

Phil.—Heigho! That's world-wide flattery. But what's the matter? Why are you in town? Oh, excuse me—the little one is not ill?

Mrs. Vane.—She is very well, and still in the coun-

try. Won't you beg Mrs. Mathews to come and see me soon? No, don't; I will write to her myself.

Phil.—I would carry your message gladly.

Mrs. Vane.—Thank you. Why are you laughing?

Phil.—Look in this window at that old pewter mug.

Mrs. Vane.—Is that amusing? It isn't pretty.

Phil.—No, but read the card: "This tankard was once the property of Brother Jonathan Trumbull, first Governor of Connecticut," and then listen to the true story.

Mrs. Vane.—Isn't the inscription true?

Phil.—Not a bit of truth in it. While we stand here, pretending to admire the authenticated treasures in this window, I will take you behind the scenes of an antiquity shop. That tankard, until yesterday, was the property of two young friends of mine, Columbia College boys. I don't know where they got it, neither do they. Every year their parents decorate their rooms with an abundance of bric-à-brac, and every year Athos and Porthos—so they are nicknamed—empty them and carry the little collection to the shops. This year they reserved that mug till the last, because they believed it had no commercial value: yet Athos has given it a fictitious one and

disposed of it by some such tale as the inscription indicates. Isn't it funny?

Mrs. Vane.—No; I think it horrid. The poor purchaser will be deceived.

Phil.—I'll wager the shopkeeper wasn't.

Mrs. Vane.—You should not laugh at those boys, Mr. Solder. You are older, and it encourages them.

Phil.—On the contrary, they call me one of themselves. I am D'Artagnan to the other two.

Mrs. Vane.—If such a habit grows one cannot tell what it may result in. Perhaps the confidence men began so.

Phil.—Every man is a confidence man, or the dupe of one—either being taken in or taking somebody else in.

Mrs. Vane.—You are jesting, but if it were true I would rather be one of the taken in. Oh, Mr. Solder, why cannot people have more confidence in each other? Why cannot men trust more implicitly in men and in women? I am so weary of continual explanations.

Phil.—Why, Mrs. Vane!

Mrs. Vane.—Yes, this is silly talk for the street. But I go in here. Good-day, Mr. Solder; I'm so

pleased to have seen you. And tell those college boys to be more stable and economical, will you?

Phil.—I promise. But can I do nothing for you? It will be dark in half an hour; can I accompany you home, or is Mr. Vane to meet you?

Mrs. Vane.—Thanks, but I am not going home, but to my mother's house quite near. Good-bye.

[PHIL *lifts his hat, and* MRS. VANE *enters a shop.*]

SCENE II.—Fifty-seventh Street in New York, two hours later.

[JOHN SYLVESTER *and* HARRY WALLACE *sauntering.*]

John.—How are the funds, Athos?

Harry.—Haven't seen quotations lately.

John.—Look in your pockets.

Harry.—No theatre to-night, my Porthos: the Governor Trumbull tankard has almost disappeared. I have eighty-six cents and a papal coin of two soldi, the last not negotiable.

John.—Let's spend it for *marrons;* they last longest.

Harry.—Shoot your sweet tooth, Porthy. If I was going on twenty I'd vote for beer.

John.—If you like. Shall we go back to the room for a growler?

Harry.—And find Xenophon lying in wait for us? I feel like putting ever so many stadia between him and me to-night. Besides, I have a scheme that is immense.

John.—I'm tired of your hare-brained schemes that put a fellow in a funk and end in nothing. What is it this time? robbery?

Harry.—No, romance. Last year I used to chum a little with a fellow who lived on Fifty-seventh Street, and going and coming by night I was always surprised to meet so many ladies unattended. The fact is, Fifty-seventh is a very quiet street, and long freedom from molestation has emboldened the fair ones to act as if they were in Cambridge. Well, suppose one of these adventuresome ladies were to be accosted by a rude man on this quiet street, and suppose I happened to be near at hand? What follows? The lady calls for help: I fly to her rescue. I attack the villain, who will be dressed like a gentleman; he makes his escape muttering threats of vengeance. The lady of course hears him, and her personal fears melt into fears for her brave defender. I laugh his threats to scorn, offer my arm to the exhausted pigeon, now soothing her and now admiring her courage. Next day the real fun commences. I know all about

women: all women are romantic and read novels. So I go to her house to inquire if her health has suffered by the fright. I tell her I have fought with her persecutor. Who was wounded? Who but her defender, who wears his arm dangling in a sling. "Alas!" she will cry, "you are wounded, and it is for me!" Then she immediately falls in love with me. See?

John.—I suppose you could arrange all this on the stage. The pedestrians of Fifty-seventh Street are not in your pay.

Harry.—One is; I mean to pay her in love. This requires but three people: the lady whose life I shall save, myself, and you.

John.—Me? No, you don't. I don't want to finish up in the station-house.

Harry.—There comes the cold shower. Your part is the simplest. You will be the villain. All you have to do is to run up by the side of the lady and mutter some words—never mind what; say them in Latin if you can; I'll join in at once with "Unhand her, villain!" Then you threaten me for all you're worth and make off. The rest is mine.

John.—I have the thankless part, as usual.

Harry.—Why, I'll thank you. You, too, my noble Porthy, shall be a savior; you shall save me!

John.—What if a policeman—

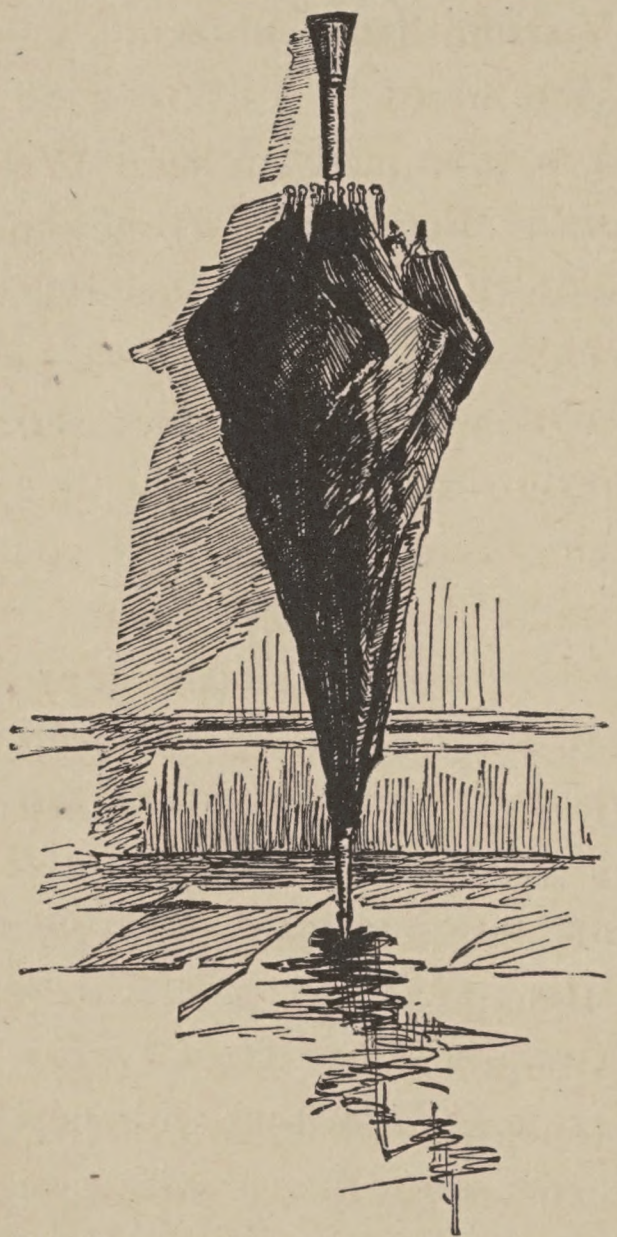
Harry.—Nonsense, there are none in New York after dark. Here we are in Fifty-seventh Street, and there comes a woman. Step back into the shadow. See, she's crossing the street. After her like a cat. The moon is hidden, no one about, everything favors us. [JOHN *runs along the black street;* HARRY *follows more slowly.*] A scream! Yes, by Jove, he's done it! Now for my part.

ACT II.

[*Passes at the house of* MRS. VANE'S *mother on Lexington Avenue, near Fifty-seventh Street.*]

Mrs. Vane.—[*Musing.*] If I could feel I've done right! My mind misgives me. Why doesn't mother answer my letter? Will she take Charles's part? I put my case strongly in the letter I wrote her to-day. I left Charles to teach him that an honest woman may not remain in the same house with a suspicious husband and preserve her self-respect. The lesson lasts for three days, and then I go out, meet Charles, and spoil everything. I was too startled to know my own

husband. I cried, "Let me alone, sir; how dare you touch me?" Then that young gentleman, thinking I had been insulted—by my own husband!—came up,



called him blackguard, and offered me his arm. I accepted it. Oh, Charles will be furious!—he will never forgive me!

[*Enter maid,* MR. VANE *behind her.*]

Maid.—Ma'am, here is—

Mr. Vane.—Your husband.

Mrs. Vane.—You here!

Mr. Vane.—Yes, madam, I am here. You may go, girl. [*Exit maid.*] Four days ago they told me this house was closed. Perhaps you would like to know how I discovered your retreat? It wasn't difficult. I went to your mother in the country; she would not keep your secret, so distressed is she by your folly. Yesterday evening I returned: I saw you on Fifty-seventh Street and followed you; I came up with you, prepared to sue for pardon—to blame myself for what had occurred—to forgive and to be forgiven. What was my reception? You beat off the first word with your umbrella!

Mrs. Vane.—I did not recognize you—I was so frightened. I thought—

Mr. Vane.—One moment. I saw more. I stood as if turned to stone, when, having beaten your lawful husband, you walked away on the arm of another man.

Mrs. Vane.—Whom I never saw before. Believe me, Charles—but did you follow us? You saw also

that he left me at the door of this house: he merely offered a strange lady protection against what seemed an insult. Did you demand an explanation from that gentleman when he returned? Oh, I hope so!

Mr. Vane.—[*Aside.*] We shall see if she never saw him before. [*Aloud.*] The explanation was on my side, madam. I explained in full to the young gentleman, and he will lie abed getting better of a broken arm long enough to understand it.

Mrs. Vane.—[*Admiringly.*] Charles, you fought for me! [*Pityingly.*] Oh, are you hurt? [*Sternly.*] Charles, Charles! what have you done? You will be sent to prison. You have wounded, perhaps killed an innocent man. I swear I do not know him. A letter to mother ready for the post is up-stairs; I'll send for it; you shall open it and be convinced. Will you go up for it, or shall I send the maid?

Mr. Vane.—I will go. No, I won't. Clara, I have been unjust—

Mrs. Vane.—Do go for the letter.

Mr. Vane.—I will go.

[*He leaves the room. The Maid enters.*]

Maid.—A gentleman, ma'am; here is his card.

Mrs. Vane.—[*Reading card.*] Mr. Henry Wallace.

Who is he? Tell him I am engaged. [*Sees* HARRY, *who has followed and stands in door, his right arm in a sling.*] Oh, is it you, sir? And your poor arm? Ah, thank God! your wound is not so grave as he told me.

Harry.—[*Astonished.*] Who told you?

Mrs. Vane.—Your adversary, sir.

Harry.—[*Aside.*] She's crazy. [*Aloud.*] My adversary? Do you know him?

Mrs. Vane.—Perfectly; he is my husband.

Harry.—The deuce! Then the man who accosted you last night—

Mrs. Vane.—Was my husband. And there—there he is now! That is his voice in the hall. Oh, sir, go away, do; what will he think if he finds you here this time? Go! Go!

Harry.—[*Nervously.*] Certainly, of course. I want nothing better than to get out, but how?

Mrs. Vane.—Here—this way—go into the dining-room, the door opens on the hall. Go out softly for my sake.

[*As* HARRY *goes into the dining-room* MR. VANE *enters from the hall.*]

Mr. Vane.—[*Raging.*] So, madam, you trick me at every turn. I had scarcely climbed the stairs when I

heard a man's voice in this room. Don't deny it! I heard him, and I will know who this visitor is. But he can't leave till I've seen him. Aha! I've locked the hall door; here is the key, and I'm going—

Mrs. Vane.—Stop, Charles Vane! stop where you are. Would you have the baseness to strike a defenceless man? a man whom no one but you has put in that condition?

Mr. Vane.—What! is that man here?

Mrs. Vane.—Your adversary is here, sir. He came with his poor right arm bandaged to tell me not to be anxious. And now will you finish your reckless work? Go into the dining-room and destroy the man who has already suffered so much for my sake, and whose name I never knew until I read it on his card. You will not? Then I will call in Mr. Henry Wallace, and you may hear what he has to say.

[*She reaches for the bell;* MR. VANE *stays her hand.*]

Mr. Vane.—No, no; it is not necessary. I believe you, Clara; I never doubted you. I owe the gentleman a thousand apologies, but I prefer to offer them when you are not by. Will you please go up-stairs while I quietly show him out? Oh, the dickens! too late!

[HARRY *throws open the dining-room door, using both hands in a natural manner. He starts on seeing husband and wife, and hurriedly puts the left arm by mistake into the sling.*]

Harry.—[*Stammering.*] The door was locked ; I—I fear I have lost my way.

Vane.—[*Trying to smile.*] Come in, my dear sir; everything is explained. [*In a low voice to Harry.*] I have told her I broke your arm; don't betray me. [*Aloud.*] If you will suggest, Mr. Wallace, how we can atone for the pain and annoyance this accident has caused you—

Mrs. Vane.—Hadn't we better hear Mr. Wallace's account of what occurred last night?

Mr. Vane.—[*Hastily.*] By no means, Clara; why linger over a painful theme? Mr. Wallace already understands that you were too frightened last night to recognize your own husband. As you have learned not to go out alone after dark, the end isn't so bad after all. There are no bones—or, um—just a few bones broken.

Mrs. Vane.—How can you talk so lightly, Charles, when you might have deprived this gallant gentleman of his life. As it is, you wounded him in his most

useful member. [*Pointing to sling.*] Why, how strange!

Mr. Vane.—Eh, what's strange?

Mrs. Vane.—A moment since it was his right arm: now his left arm is in the sling!

Harry.—[*Confused.*] Yes, yes, it is my left arm. That's my most useful arm. I'm left-handed.

Mr. Vane.—To be sure, the gentleman is left-handed. Are you sure you have had it carefully set? Let me accompany you to my physician.

Mrs. Vane.—I begin to understand; you have made a dupe of me. Mr. Vane, when you have a satisfactory explanation to offer you will find me in the drawing-room. Good-morning, gentlemen.

[MRS. VANE *makes a haughty bow and goes out.*]

Mr. Vane.—Clara! No, let her go. Between us we've made a mess of it. But you, young man—I should like to break your arm in earnest. What do you mean by coming here?

[*Enter Maid.*]

Maid.—Two gentlemen to see Mr. Vane: Mr. Solder and Mr. Sylvester. Shall I show them in?

Mr. Vane.—Yes, show 'em in ; show everybody in. Ah, Solder !

[*Enter* PHIL *and* JOHN.]

Phil.—So the young scamp is here. Mr. Vane, I hope he has given you no annoyance : this other one has told me all about the encounter of last night. I recognized you by his description.

John.—Yes, this is the gentleman who accosted that lady—

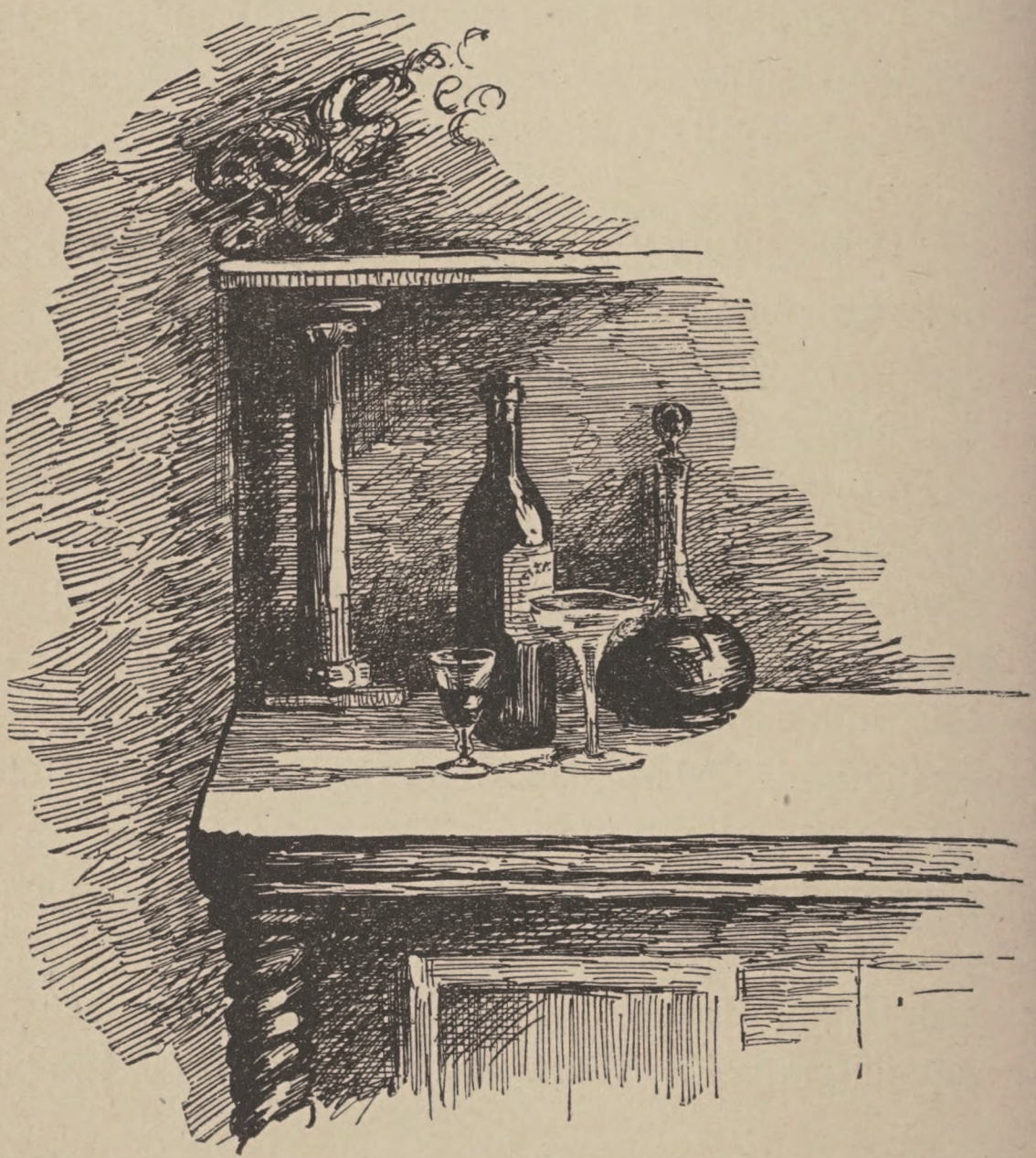
Mr. Vane.—[*Quickly.*] I remember you ; I remember saying something foolish about your being a witness to my wife's walking away with another man. Very happy to see you here and to ask you to forget it. So these gentlemen are your friends, Solder ; then they must be mine.

Phil. —They are Columbia College youths, and a hard pair, I fear. Porthos here was alarmed when Athos didn't come back last night, and as they insist on calling me D'Artagnan, to be true to the character I was forced to hunt him up. If they have been playing pranks on you, Mr. Vane, I beg you to forgive them.

Mr. Vane.—Readily. It's not so long ago since I was young myself. There are no bones broken—eh,

Mr. Wallace? or tales told, eh, gentlemen? Come into the dining-room; this is my mother-in law's house, but I may be able to find something on the buffet. Lead the way, Athos, is it?—you have been there before.

[CURTAIN.]



THE LITTLE HOUSE IN HARLEM.

A FIRST APPEARANCE.

A FIRST APPEARANCE.

TIME: six in the evening of a September day.

PLACE: the sitting-room of the Mathewses' house in Harlem. It is in disorder.

[*Enter* PHIL SOLDER *carrying hat and small valise. While removing his gloves he looks around in surprise.*]

Phil.—Stupid creature, that new girl of Mrs. Mathews. She didn't seem to know whether her mistress

is at home or not. By the look of this room I should say she is out. Julius, of course, hasn't come up yet; he'll be along in a few minutes now. He can ask me to dinner or not as he pleases. When the train stopped at 125th Street I jumped off without thinking it was so near dinner-time. I must confide my happiness to Julius: no one sympathizes with me as he does. And Mrs. Mathews, too, how glad she will be to know that Clara has at last fixed the day! Dear Clara! My Clara! I'll just write her a note while waiting for Julius to come in.

[*He sits at the writing-desk and draws paper and pen towards him. He continues to muse.*]

To think I've been in love with Clara Adae for two years and am only now going to marry her! Neither of us will shoulder that sinful waste. But everything conspired against us, and everybody. If it hadn't been for her brother we might have married last year. George is a crotchety fellow, not a bit like his sister. But there is nobody like Clara. [*A door slams.*] There's Julius now. [*He listens.*] No; somebody else. I shall have time to write a line. [*He writes.*] "My own Clara: It seems an age since we parted." [*He looks up with a smile.*] We said good-bye at nine

o'clock this morning, but it's true all the same. [*Writes again.*] "All day on the train I thought of my darling and longed to return to her: I only kept from boarding the upbound express by reflecting that

this short absence would hasten the hour when we shall be together always." [*He stops writing and says*:] To-day is the fifteenth of September. On the fifteenth of October we are to be married at Grace

Church. Won't Julius be surprised? But that's the way *I* do things. [*Writes again.*] "Can't you let me see some of the millinery people for you? I will impress them with the necessity to hurry. Don't reply that I have too much to do as it is, for how can I get through the next month unless I'm too busy to think? Yet I couldn't be too busy to think of—my bride! Oh, it thrills me deliciously to write those words—to speak them. How new, sweetheart, how new and sacred they sound!"

[*A cry rings through the house. Hurrying footsteps.* PHIL *starts up.*]

What's that peculiar noise? Can it be that Mrs. Mathews is sick? If she is, surely that block of a girl would tell me. I suppose Biddy has smashed some crockery and yelled. Now she's as still as a mouse. If Mrs. Mathews comes in I'll make as if I hadn't heard it. Clara and I will never employ a stupid Irish girl. Where shall we live? We are agreed it would be foolish to accept Mrs. Adae's invitation to live with her: three families in one house, however large, would be sure to come to grief. I am good-natured and Clara is an angel of sweetness, but we must preserve those qualities for our own little home.

I think it would be sensible to buy a place out here, and as soon as Julius comes in I'll ask him what he paid for this house. Ten thousand would be a steep figure. I could make one big payment, and the rest in easy instalments. I could do it in two years. Let me see—what did I draw last year out of the *Dramatic Press?* There are my shares of stock, they're looking up. If I sold I could easily provide for the first payment. Meantime, why can't I sweep something off the Street? I'll just touch Julius as to a deal when he comes in. Wonder where he is? [*He consults his watch.*] After seven! Strange! Julius is always home early. However, I've got my letter to write. How time gallops when I'm with Clara, even on paper! [*He reads over what he has written.*] "how new and sacred they sound! Darling, I wish we were to be married in Lenox. Then, like mated birds, we could come home together from the mountains. If our nest had been ready I should have insisted. Of course, I don't mean *insisted.* Can you think where I am writing? But you'll see Mrs. Mathews's monogram. I came straight here from the train to ask Julius about one of these pretty houses. I am going to buy one for you—" [*He looks up, and a cloud settles on his face.*] Is that quite the truth?

I am going to try to buy one, but oughtn't I to tell Clara my circumstances in plain words? She knows I'm not rich, but she doesn't know how really poor I am. I shall have to rake every cent together to make the first payment, and must sell my share of the paper. If I do I may not be retained on the staff, and without salary for pressing needs, how can I furnish the house, or get myself a correct outfit? Of course Rock will carry me, but I don't mean ever again to go heavily into debt. What shall I need? First a frock suit; mine's rusty, and if ours is a morning wedding—absurd, Phil! who would be married in old clothes? Well, a frock suit—put down $115; a new swallow-tail, $125; a suit to travel in—cheviot, I think, $65; four trousers and a morning coat, $95; what does that foot up?—$400. That's not much; I couldn't decently do with less. I'll give Rock a hundred on the old bill. As for shirts, it's economy to go in for them, and I'll get two round dozen of the best. Luckily I haven't opened that box of pajamas I bought in the spring. Oh, I'm all right; if Clara is as economical as I am, we shall pull through. What am I talking about? My wife shan't lack anything; I'll do the economizing myself. I'll cut two trousers out of this memorandum—that brings it down $25, and I'll

give Rock only $50 on account. [*Begins to write again.*] "or would my own girl prefer to take an apartment in town? I know of one I could get in the Belgravia." [*Reads this over and remarks,*] Deuce take it, I don't want that apartment; the rent is extravagant, and it costs more to fit up one of those homeless flats than a house. I would rub that out, only I wish her to choose. I'm not afraid of the future; if Julius will give me some points I may do great things in the next thirty days. Where is Julius? [*Opens his watch.*] Nearly eight! impossible! I'm sure Mrs. Mathews isn't home; probably she and Julius are dining down-town, and taking in a theatre—but this house is full of people; I can hear 'em running up and down stairs in a tremendous hurry —they can't be going to have a party; this room doesn't look like it. It's that servant—she's entertaining her friends while her mistress is out; perhaps I'd better cast an eye on her; however, it's not my business, and as she knows I'm in here she won't dare to do much. I wonder if she can give me some bread and cold meat; I haven't eaten since morning. No, I won't ask her; I'll finish my letter and then cut down to the rooms. Where was I? "the Belgravia. I'm going to be perfectly frank with you, Clara; though I should

be contented *anywhere* with you, I prefer the house—our own house. We should feel so much more settled in it, and, next to an hotel, a flat is the worst place to bring up children in." [*He breaks off with a nervous laugh.*] You've said it now, Phil! That must come out. Tear up that sheet and begin over again. [*Leans back in his chair, closes his eyes and murmurs,*] Children! a child! what a strange idea! and what a delightful idea. How proud I shall be! father! It seems as if I never heard the word before. It's a sweet, a mysterious word; a name so sacred, almost as sacred as mother. Oh, no, not so sacred as mother! Clara, Clara! oh, my darling! I am mad to take you in my arms—to press you against my heart!

[*The noises in the hall increase to an alarming extent; the street door opens and closes two or three times, footsteps shake the stairs, voices mingle in a confusion of orders.*]

This is pandemonium! As a friend of the family I must send these domestics away; I believe they're all drunk. [*Starts toward the door: at this moment* JULIUS *throws it open, speaking excitedly to the family physician.*]

Julius.—Let me go up with you, doctor. No?—then run up as fast as you can, and send me word at once—every moment is precious!

Phil.—[*Anxiously.*] Is Mrs. Mathews ill?

Julius.—[*Scarcely looking at him.*] You here? You are sure everything is going on well, doctor? You think we may congratulate ourselves on all the circumstances? I hear them calling you—hurry, doctor—I'll go up with you; I must go up with you—

[*He pushes the doctor to the door, and is about to follow into the hall, but the other restrains him, makes a gesture to urge him to be calm, and closes the door.* JULIUS *sinks into a chair, hiding his face with his hands.*]

Phil.—My dear boy, is Madge so sick as that? I'm terribly grieved; I didn't know it. That lump of a maid never told me. That's why I'm here in the way. I'll clear out at once.

Julius.—Don't go, Phil—don't leave me alone—Listen; do you hear anything?

Phil.—Not a sound. She is better. Hear how still it has become!

Julius.—Yes, it is still—frightfully still; this silence fills me with terror. Oh, Phil! if—

Phil.—Cheer up, old man! Isn't it a good sign? What is Madge's malady?

Julius.—[*Groaning.*] Talk of something else. When did you come to town?

Phil.—An hour ago. I bring good news. Congratulate me, Julius! You don't know Clara, but you will soon, and then you shall tell me what a treasure I've won.

Julius.—[*Listening at the door.*] Thank God! I hear somebody coming at last!

Phil.—She's better, of course. I'm so glad. Now you can listen to me. I'm tired of being a bachelor, and I am about to become a—

Julius.—[*Who has heard the last words, answers at random as he throws open the door and discovers the doctor.*] And I, please heaven, am about to become—

Doctor.—[*Finishing the sentence.*] A father. Yes, Mr. Mathews, all has gone well, and you are—

Julius.—Madge! Madge!

Doctor.—Very comfortable. You may go up now, Mr. Mathews.

[JULIUS *utters a cry of joy and darts from the room. The Doctor enters.*]

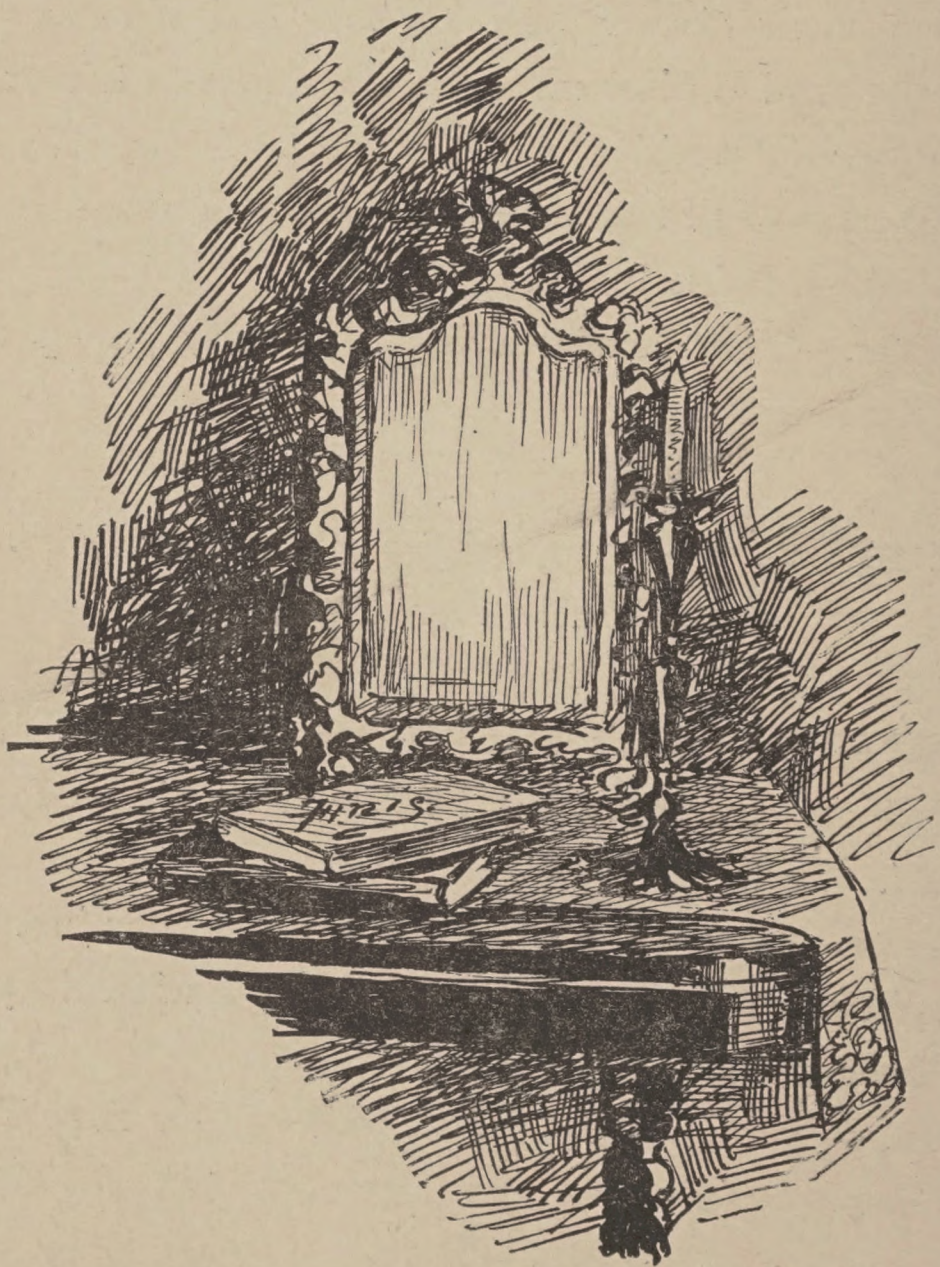
Phil.—Eh? what's this? That girl never told me a word, and consequently I've been making a fool of myself. Is it true?

Doctor.—A most promising infant, sir, has just been brought upon the stage of life, strong and healthy: do you hear that cry?

Phil.—[*To himself.*] Well, well, well! And I was thinking of giving up the *Dramatic Press!* Fate is

against me. As the season opens I find myself as usual taking notes at the first night and the first appearance.

[CURTAIN.]



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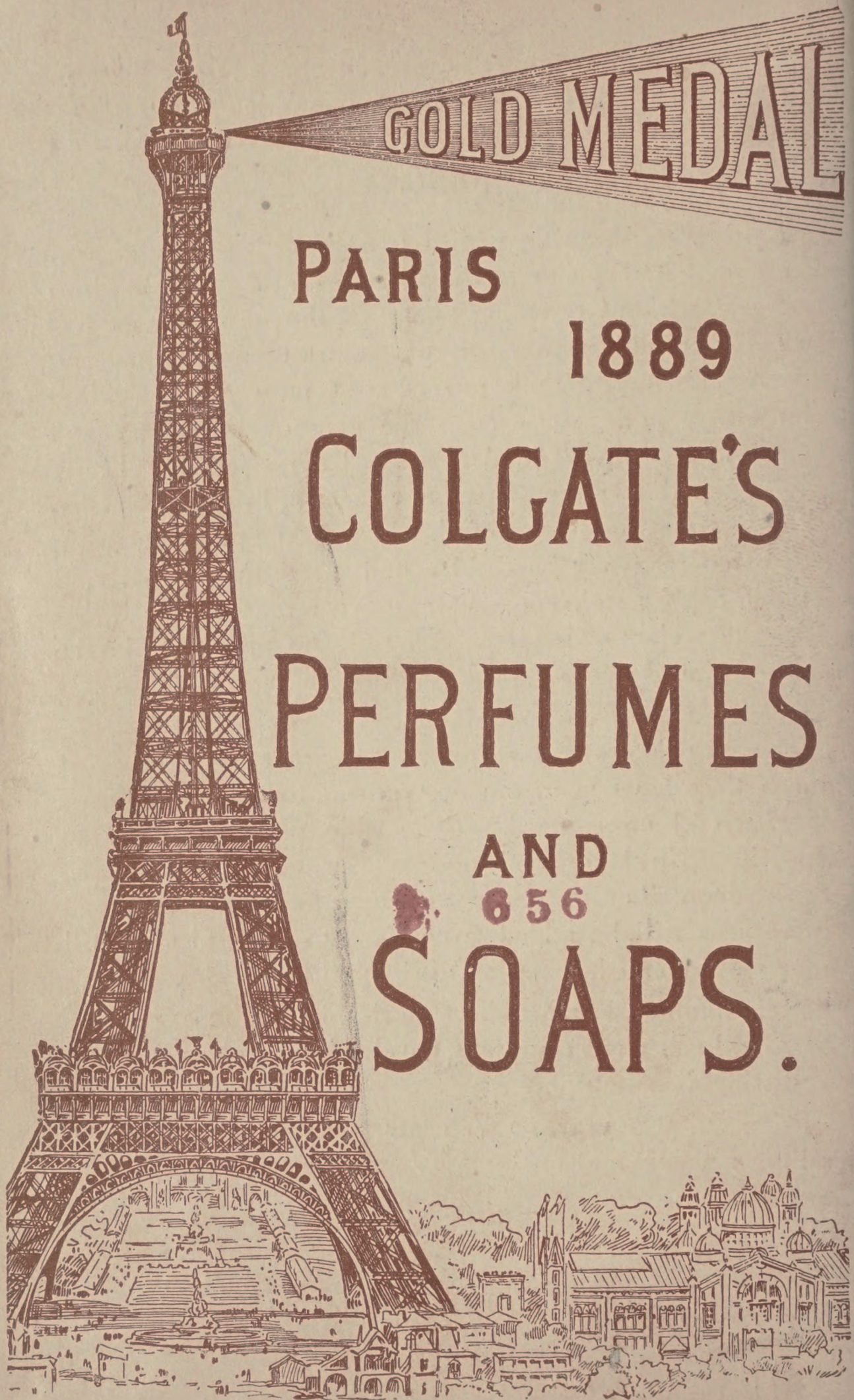
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